Canadian Radio-Television Commission

Symposium on Television Violence

24-26 August 1975.

Symposium on Television Violence
Colloque sur la violence à la télévision

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Donald Gordon Centre, Queens University, Kingston, Ont.

Canadian Radio-Television Commission

Conseil de la Radio-Télévision Canadienne

A SYMPOSIUM ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE

organized by the Research Branch
Canadian Radio-Television Commission

Donald Gordon Centre for Continuing
Education, Queen's University, Kingston
August 24-26, 1975.

I Purpose of Symposium

Excessive violence in the mass popular media has been a recurring cause of vocal public concern for over fifty years in North America. This issue has traditionally been seen in the perspective of effect and control - what does exposure to large amounts of media violence do to the public and particularly to children, and how can it be therefore limited and controlled.

Violence on television remains for the public the most salient symptom of malaise in the mass media. It is important to examine all types of approach and study which could lead to more coherent methods to improve the situation and even to formation of clearer, more positive goals for our systems of mass communication. It is especially urgent to enrich traditional methods of study and control presently being applied with new kinds of competence, new methods which may be more fruitful.

Any productive examination of violence on television today must considerably broaden the traditional perspective, and search for the neglected causes within our systems of mass entertainment and information which favour the formula and routine, the aggressive and conflictual. It must also situate and define more intelligently the role of violence as a dramatic element in fiction or information, its legitimate, even necessary place as a literary or informational device.

With these general considerations, the Canadian Radio-Television Commission has authorized its Research Branch to organize a Symposium on Television Violence.

II Goals of the Symposium

The goals of the Symposium are to define and enlarge the scope of systematic and non-systematic knowledge of broadcast violence;

to study means of developing knowledge in the insufficiently developed areas of research; and to find ways of encouraging positive action in terms of creative programming and media assessment to correct aspects of production and distribution which could be considered negative. It will accomplish these aims

By surveying the scientific evidence that exposure to excessive amounts of broadcast violence may have an adverse influence on values and behaviour.

By introducing into the public debate on broadcast violence consideration of the production (mechanization, formulation) and systematic (competitive, scheduling, mass marketing approach) aspects of the problem.

By establishing the necessity of creating alternatives to formula series exploiting violence as a dramatic and competitive device through active encouragement of quality programming by the Canadian production industry.

By surveying the present means of media control and developing new approaches for assessing and improving the broadcast product.

By underlining the need for more systematic research into the technical, economic, and creative logic of cultural production and diffusion in broadcasting.

III General Themes and Areas of Concern

The Symposium will examine three general themes and areas of concern: problems of the public impact of television violence, problems of the industrial perspective, and problems of control.

a.) Public Impact

The core motivation for public pressure to control violence on television is rooted in the observation of the rising dangers of contemporary urban life, crime in the streets, juvenile anti-social behaviour, etc., which is often linked in a causal relationship with excessive and unrepresentative amounts of violence on television screens. This causal pattern is the single most studied aspect of the whole question of violence on television.

The Symposium, while providing for a survey and debate of this evidence in a Canadian context, will widen the field of discussion

of the impact of violence by placing it in a historic perspective and by seeking to clarify in critical terms the function of violence in drama, news and public affairs.

b.) The Industry Perspective

Although the use and frequency of violent material on television is greatly influenced by certain mass marketing elements and the competitive logic of the North American broadcasting system, and is finally the result of decisions made at various levels in the production process, very little systematic effort has been devoted to examining this industry perspective of violence in television.

Despite the long history of attempts to prove damage and to institute stricter controls, there has been little appreciable change in the tendency of the mass media, particularly television, to over-exploit the obvious elements of mass appeal inherent in heightened conflict and violence.

This Symposium will devote two plenary panel sessions and one demonstration to exploring the production and system realities of television violence with particular attention to Canadian production industry problems and potential. This section of the Symposium is also designed to permit full discussion of the possibilities in the Canadian broadcasting environment for alternate approaches to programming and alternate competitive philosophies.

c.) Control and Improvement

Cultural products intended for mass consumption have traditionally been the object of attempts at various forms of social control or outright censorship. These attempts have always been the subject of controversy. Moreover, the considerable development of electronic means of production and diffusion in the last twenty years throws into doubt society's ability to control individual cases of cultural content deemed undesirable.

If Canadian television stations alone transmit over a half million hours of programming a year, this powerful system of cultural diffusion can be said to have won, by its very magnitude, a certain autonomy from detailed censure. Moreover, consensus on what is legitimate or not, what is of high or trivial quality, is the result of successive reactions to excesses in programming.

This logic tends to favour pressure for negative control, and to leave little room for discussion of positive goals, alternatives, larger system planning, or the role of intelligent criticism and discussion. To improve the quality of this flow, to eradicate even some of the symptoms, like excessive violence, of its malaise, may require new means of evaluation, new kinds of positive supervision.

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THE SYMPOSIUM ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE

There can be no clear-cut consensus about what an event as complex as the Symposium on Television Violence conclusively demonstrated or who it convinced of what. Nonetheless, it is probably fair to say that most participants left substantially impressed with most of the following propositions:

a) Violence in our society is a serious problem and will likely continue to be a matter of great concern.

b) That North American - especially U.S. - television industry unduly exploits both violence and the fear of violence because of the demand for mass-production to satisfy enormous commercial pressures. Under these pressures, violence can be one of a favorite few dramatic writing and shooting conventions that can quickly be worked into program series based on action formulae.

c) It is nevertheless clear that violence has an important and legitimate place in the popular dramatic arts and can never categorically be dismissed as inappropriate or dysfunctional.

d) Television violence probably supports or reinforces violence to varying degrees in our society, possibly by acclimating the young (or otherwise susceptible) to violence as a means of conflict resolution, or worse, identifying it as a normal and inevitable condition in human affairs. Other factors contributing to social violence, poverty for instance, are probably more

central and important. Unlike these factors however, television violence is at least hypothetically amenable to control.

e) Even if (d) is accepted, there are few regulatory control options that might acceptably and effectively minimize it. Supervisory options, by the way, were barely discussed and therefore not dismissed. The principal possibility lies not so much in a negative control of violent programming, but in encouraging and supporting the creation of more imaginative and attractive alternative forms of popular entertainment television programming.

f) The treatment of violence in news deserves scrutiny but any interference with news production is generally abhorrent in North American eyes. Newsmen unanimously maintained that news portrayal of violence often has good effects (interestingly enough, however, any bad or antisocial effects in any form of television programming were generally viewed as unproven by network executives). Because the presentation of news is structured, news programming is, in the largest sense, dramatic programming.

g) Because of our sensitivities about the inherent value of freedom of speech

i) under existing law, any broad negative regulatory control of television violence would not stand up in court unless Parliament were to enact specific legislation

ii) censorship, based on the pre-viewing of programming, cannot be a legitimate function of the CRTC. Public censure, based on post broadcast criticism, was mentioned as a possibility requiring as a focal point some CRTC commitment to a continuing public forum. But, more important than either censorship or censure is the encouragement of a more developed concept of creative responsibility.

h) The problem of television violence cannot satisfactorily be resolved by a swift and direct policy move. Rather, a goal of public and industrial education should be established to inform and influence both the production and consumption of television programming. If such an educational approach were to work, the largely untapped prosocial, even "civilizing" effects of television might reach fruition.

i) While some participants and observers were frustrated by the lack of clear-cut policy options either formulated or recommended to minimize the undesirable effects of television violence, the broadly educational functions and objectives of the Symposium were generally considered surprisingly effective,

offering a comprehensive understanding of a difficult and complex problem. It was not infrequently suggested that the Symposium approach to intricate issues like violence might well be repeated on other subjects of concern to the Commission.

STAFF PAPERS ON THE SYMPOSIUM ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE

1. Three Measures of Public Attitudes Towards Television Violence

2. Violent Motion Pictures; Crime Radio Programs, and Crime Comic Books - Three Controversies in the Scholarly and Popular Press 1909-1953*

3. A Slective Bibliography of Critical Works on Violence in the Arts

4. The Information Media's Depiction of Reality

5. Some Themes in Research on the Effects of Televised Violence

6. Public Preference, Production Source and Amount of Violent and Non Violent Programming in Selected Canadian Markets

7. Economic Realities of Canadian Production

8. Problems of Alternatives and Production Diversity

9. Social Uses of Media in Canada

10. Problems of Mass Media and the Discipline of Literary Criticism.

Available from Research Branch, 1401, 100 Metcalfe Street
Berger Building, Ottawa, Ontario.

REPORT ON A SYMPOSIUM ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE

RAPPORT AU SUJET D'UN COLLOQUE SUR LA VIOLENCE A LA TELEVISION

Donald Gordon Centre, Queens University, Kingston, Ont.

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Canadian Industry Realities: Can we do without Violence?	Ken Sobol, freelance writer and critic Les Brown, television correspondent, New York Times Ralph Ellis, president, Ralph C. Ellis Enterprises Raymond David, vice-president, Radio Canada
Economic Realities of Canadian Production	Background paper prepared by CRTC Research Branch

SECTION FOUR: IMPROVEMENT AND CONTROL

Legal and Social Implications of Control Mechanisms	John Lawrence, Q.C., CRTC Dr. Hans Mohr, Commissioner, Federal Law Reform Commission

SUMMATION OF SYMPOSIUM

Dr. Northrop Frye, professor of English, University of Toronto, and CRTC Commissioner.

Introductory Remarks - delivered by Pierre Juneau, former CRTC chairman, at opening of Symposium

We thought of convening this Symposium because, we have witnessed the growing concern in Canadian society about violence in television. It is quite obvious, however, that while this concern was growing, the solutions have appeared difficult to determine. It is also obvious that everyone has noticed the pitfalls, the censorship pitfalls, for instance, and the particular problem we have in Canada in view of the considerable importance of cable in our broadcasting environment. We still have not excluded the possibility of having an ordinary CRTC hearing. We thought that a more informal gathering of this kind, which would be part of the process of acquiring and developing more knowledge on the subject of violence, would be a more appropriate contribition by the CRTC at this time. That is why we thought that a symposium of this kind should gather people from various sectors who are knowledgeable and interested in television and this particular matter of violence in television. By the various sectors, we mean people representing the scientific sectors, psychology, various social sciences, the various professional sectors - production, writing, criticism - and also the economic aspect of broadcasting.

In closing, I'll again stress that this meeting is not a hearing. It is not intended to lead to any authoritative decisions by the

CRTC. Is is rather a forum where we hope people, knowledgeable and interested in the various aspects of violence in broadcasting, will have a chance to exchange views on the very many complicated aspects of this matter.

SECTION ONE: THE PUBLIC ISSUE

The motivation for public pressure to control violence on television is rooted in the observation of the rising dangers of contemporary urban life - crime in the streets, juvenile anti-social behaviour, etc. - which is often linked in a causal relationship with excessive and unrepresentative amounts of violence on television screens.

This section of the Symposium was designed to widen the field of discussion of the impact of violence by placing it in a historic perspective and by seeking to clarify in critical terms the function of violence in drama, news and public affairs.

Dr. Garth Jowett, professor of Communication Studies at the University of Windsor, provided a brief history of the controversy concerning the social effects of various mass media: literature, motion pictures and comics. Colin Low, National Film Board producer, delivered a personal appraisal of the changing use of violence in motion pictures. Two panel discussions, "Critical perspectives on violence as a dramatic convention in the arts and mass media", and "The treatment of violence in information programming", completed the section.

A Brief History of Controversy Concerning the Social Effects Of Mass Media: Literature, Motion Pictures, Comic Books.

Garth Jowett is an associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Windsor, and chairman of that university's Centre for Canadian Communication Studies. Mr. Jowett undertook his undergraduate studies at York University in Toronto and received his doctorate in history and communications at the University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Jowett has published widely in the areas of motion picture history and communications research. His next book, "Democratic Art: A Social History of Movie Going", will be published in January, 1976. He is currently working on another book on the history of communications.

The questions raised by the propensity of the popular arts to gravitate toward violence as a thematic staple have been with us for a long time, and as this gathering demonstrates, they show no signs of being answered in the near future.

One can find a great deal of evidence that the content of popular literature was being severely criticized for violent

content as early as the sixteenth century. The introduction of movable type in the fifteenth century not only encouraged the development of Luther's Reformation, but it was also responsible for the spread of literacy, and the subsequent growth of vernacular literature. The production of reading material for the general population, although severely limited by modern-day standards, was immediately met with the criticism that such literature encouraged and preyed upon mankind's basest instincts.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there developed a fairly elaborate system of reading matter for the working-class. Professionally produced expressly for this clientele, these broadsheets and chapbooks have a very high violence content. Again, many of these newspapers depended on a high level of sensationalist content; and crime stories, with all the gory details, couched in Victorian euphamisms, were very popular, and there was a great deal of criticism concerning the public's seemingly insatiable appetite for this type of story. It is worthy of note that Canadian newspapers of the period were much more restrained in tone; politics seemed to be the major preoccupation of Canadian editors.

After the 1830's, the new steam presses were for the first

time making cheap, rapid, quantity printing a possibility, and coupled with significant increases in the literacy rate, American and European markets were flooded with reading matter designed for an urban working class. Most of these plots featured some form of violence, although American nineteenth century literature was, on the whole, more restrained than British literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been. Victorian literature in England ranged from the sensationalist broadsheets distributed on the street to the equally popular, and sometimes surprisingly violent books of Charles Dickens. What popular nineteenth century literature in both countries had in common were a large number of detractors, who were convinced that its consumption was responsible for all the ills of society.

While the movies were the perfect entertainment medium for an increasingly urbanized society, they also represented the most potent threat yet. A major aspect of the introduction of the mass media, and one that was particularly important to the future of the motion picture industry, was their ability to bypass the existing channels of social communication and authority structures in the spheres of politics, religion, kinship and education, and to establish "direct" contact with the individual. Particularly in the fields of education and religion, parents and teachers became concerned because they felt powerless to prevent the influence of these new communications forms, which were so readily accessible to the young. The sudden awareness

of these new communications forces caused a great deal of questioning about normal methods of social control, since the mass media seemed to be more powerful instruments for influencing people than any previously known. It was also apparent that there were no established social or cultural control mechanisms which could deal with these new phenomena.

Very soon after its introduction, the motion picture became the subject of intensive investigation and study. In the years prior to the Second World War literally thousands of such studies were undertaken by many diverse groups, using a wide variety of investigative techniques. The findings they produced confirmed practically every point of view then held on the impact and influence of the medium. While the research methodology and sponsoring agency may have differed, each of these studies had one overriding consideration--a concern for the power and influence of a medium which, becuase of its tremendous popularity with the general public, and especially the young, had become an important focal point in the social and cultural life of people throughout the world.

There were three basic problems facing potential investigators. First, they had to define the exact nature of their investigation--which, of the many questions posed by the influence of

the movies, were they hoping to investigate? Second, in many cases they had to devise new techniques to acquire their data. Third, once the data were acquired and analyzed, how could their findings be translated into relevant action? Many of these studies succeeded in coming to terms with the first two problems, but seldom with the third.

By far the most important series of motion picture research studies are those known as the Payne Fund Studies, conducted in the four-year period, 1929-1933. The bojective of this immense undertaking was "to provide data for answering completely or in part a wide range of separate queries" relating to the effects of motion pictures on the youth of America. The end product was a series of twelve studies published under the generic title of "Motion Pictures and Youth",--the most comprehensive investigation of mass medium then undertaken anywhere in the world. The individual studies examined such aspects of the problem as the ability of movies to transmit information and ideas; the effects of movies on children's sleep patterns; the attendance patterns of movie patrons; the role of movies in shaping the conduct and 'morality' of children, and even studies of movie content and a volume on how to appreciate movies.

The studies which are of most interest to social scientists today are Blumer and Hauser's examination of "Movies, Delinquency

and Crime"; Peter's study of "Motion Pictures and Standards of Morality"; Blumer's study of "Motion Pictures and Conduct", and Peterson and Thurstone's work on attitudes and beliefs and the retention of information. While the research methodologies which were employed in these pioneering works do not stand up to close scrutiny today, nevertheless they were an important breakthrough in the early 1930's, and were well received by other social scientists, with, of course, a few dissident voices.

The book which came under the most fire was Blumer's book called, "Movies and Conduct." Blumer employed an autobiography technique in which he had people from various spheres of life including a large number of people who were labeled juvenile delinquents, write diaries as to how and what they felt about motion pictures. As an example of the material, I'll quote you the response of a seventeen year old girl in high school. "Yes, the movies do change my moods. Sometimes when I feel sort of blue and I go see Clara Bow or some other actress I feel like flirting with everybody when I get out of the theatre. I usually feel that way until the next morning, if the picture made an impression on me." Blumer concluded that movies did indeed have a deep and permanent psychological effect on many people--both adults and youths. The motion picture provided the source for rich fantasy and imitation, especially amongst adolescents, and it offered a means of "emotional possession" both during the actual performance, and even afterwards, which

could profoundly influence an individual's conduct and philosophy of life.

More importantly, Blumer's findings (and some of the other researchers) tended to confirm many of the suspicions which had been voiced by the medium's critics for nearly twenty-five years. He suggested that the content of films was more than just mere entertainment, but "are authentic portrayals of life, from which they draw patterns of behavior, stimulation to overt conduct, content for a vigorous life of imagination, and ideas of reality."[3]

Much like the recent U.S. Surgeon-General's report on violence in the mass media, the Payne Fund Studies indicated throughout a note of cautious interpretation in an attempt to present their findings as objectively as possible. Unfortunately, the intentions of the researchers were thwarted by the early publication of a popularized "summary" of their findings expressly written for public consumption. There is no denying that the studies did have an underlying, but subtle attitude of hostility toward the immense socializing influence of the commercial motion picture industry. However, the popular summary entitled, "Our Movie Made Children," written by a journalist, Henry James Forman, was much more blatant in its attack. Forman had a decided flair for selecting the most dramatic findings, and a very obvious bias

against the film industry. Throughout Forman's book, the emphasis was placed on those findings in the Studies, and even earlier studies, which indicated the harmful effects to be derived from attendance at the movies. He continually played on the fact that the majority of American films had as their central themes "love" or "sexe" or "crime," or combinations of these. The entire volume was a form of propaganda, which sociologist Kimball Young noted was "evidently stimulated by those supporters of the original research project who felt that the motion pictures constituted a serious menace to public and private morals."

The Forman book caused a mild sensation when it was published, particularly because it was prepared and presented with the full cooperation of the sponsoring agency. Given the weight of this authority, the volume received a wide and on the whole, favorable reception. It was reprinted at least four times, received reviews in major literary and popular magazines, and was widely discussed in news-papers. Unfortunately, the publicity given to Forman's book tended to obscure the important findings of the studies themselves. This fact was not lost upon many social scientists, who were very careful to distinguish between the studies and Forman's work.

The motion picture industry was obviously disturbed by the published findings of the Payne Fund Studies, and particularly by the public reception of Forman's book. Unfortunately, much of what went on as a result was done behind closed doors, and the information was never made public. The industry did engage the redoubtable Dr. Mortimer Adler to write a refutation called, "Art and Prudence," in which he suggested that "scientists" should not, and cannot really judge the moral or political consequences of an art form such as motion pictures. Adler's book is almost impossible for the layman to read.

Most importantly, the Payne Fund Studies provided valuable information precisely at the same time that the whole issue of movie influence was coming to a head. It had taken over thirty-five years for social science to come to grips with the motion picture, and the publication of the Payne Fund Studies was as much a minor triumph in the development of social science research as it was for those who wanted to know more about the depth of movie influence. However, the application of the results of this intensive research was disappointing, and it was seldom used to formulate policy or social philosophy. Inst ad, the arguments ranging around the motion picture continued on the far more subjective subject of "moral influence"--and it was ultimately the decision of the Catholic Church to combat this "immorality" in the medium that led to a viable form of social control.

It is most important to point out that the overwhelming concern of most reformers in the period prior to the 1960's was with "sex" and not with "violence." The Catholic Church's eventual entry into the fray was due to its concern with the depiction of content which was not consistent with Catholic doctrine, such as adultery, divorce and various kinds of immoral behaviour. Practically every major attempt at censorship was based upon either sexual or political material, and almost never because of violence. In an important, but forgotten book written in 1949, Gershon Legman pointed out: "...we are faced in our culture by the insurmountable schizophrenic contradiction that sex, which is legal in fact, is a crime on paper, while murder--a crime in fact--is, on paper, the best seller of all time." Legman was not the first, nor would he be the last to point out that in North American society violence was far more acceptable than sex, and still is. It is only in very recent times that violence, separated from sex as a double threat in the mass media, has become the focus of intensive investigation.

In many ways the problems associated with control of the motion picture were a precursor of similar fears voiced about television. The long struggle to make the movies more responsive to public demands has been virtually ignored as a new battle rages about television's public responsibilities. Unfortunately, the research on motion picture influence came to a virtual standstill

after 1950, once television became the most pervasive visual medium. After all this time the Payne Fund Studies still stand as one of the major achievements in this field.

1954 was the year of Joseph McCarthy, but in the comic book industry it was also the year of Frederic Wertham. Released in the spring of 1954, Wertham's book, "Seduction of the Innocent" almost single-handedly caused the comic book industry to mend its ways, and brought about a United States senatorial investigation. Wertham had been the senior psychiatrist for the Department of Hospitals in New York City for over twenty years, and he had spent a great deal of time examining juvenile delinquents. How much his preoccupation with juveniles coloured his thinking is difficult to say, but his book seems to depict all children as teetering on the brink of emotional disaster; needing only the influence of some mass medium to nudge them over the edge. While he rarely offers concrete proof for his assertions, the book contains case after case where he cleverly justaposes unpleasant incidents or attitudes with the presence of comic books to suggest causal relationships. It should be pointed out that much of Wertham's attack was aimed at "crime comics," a rather specialized form of comic book, but one which nevertheless was immensely popular. Nonetheless, all comic books came under his wrath, and the industry was forced to yield to the intense pressure to establish some form of social control.

In 1955 U.S. Senator Estes Kefauver noted in his sub-committee on juvenile delinquency report that the United States "cannot afford the calculated risk involved in the continued mass dissemination of crime and horror comic books to children." However, he flatly rejected all suggestions of government censorship, and noted that primary responsibility lay with the publishers of comic books. The industry reacted in an effort to avoid legislation, and created in October 1954, the Comics Code Authority. This was an organization which set up an elaborate, if rather vaguely worded list of restrictions with which all subscribing publications were expected to comply. In exchange for this cooperation, the comic books were permitted to display on their covers the seal which read, "Approved by the Comics Code Authority."

For whatever reason, the Code, which had been designed to protect the industry, only succeeded in killing off a number of major contributions. A comparative handful of companies were left to compete in a fairly substantial market; the rest were either unwilling to change or unable to produce a marketable product within the Code's narrow framework. Lost, even in the surviving comic books, was a certain enthusiasm and the wild imagination which had given the medium most of its finest moments.

There is every reason to be suspicious of the whole comic books controversy. The success of the Code made it relatively easy

to squeeze presumably objectionable material off the market without ever having proved them to be illicit or illegal. The Code seal made it all too simple for distributors and dealers to distinguish between "good" and "bad" publications, and thus to defend themselves from harrassment by those citizens who had been incited into a state of ill-informed indignation. Needless to say, violence in comic books was never completely eradicated and since the virtual destruction of the Comics Code in the late 1960's, comic book content is as violent as ever.

By the 1950's we had, of course, begun to seriously question the impact of television, and since that time the bulk of attention in media impact research has been focused on this medium. But we have still not solved all the problems regarding the questions of proper methods of control, nor are we likely to in the immediate future. As long as the economic structure of the mass media requires large, heterogeneous audiences, the problem of media power and public control will exist. The only solution lies in greater emphasis on diversity--to cater to the tastes of the many minority interest groups which collectively make up the "mass" audience. Certainly the questions and controversy which surround the issue of violent content in the mass media need much more thought before we can safely say that we know what role, if any, it has in our society.

Colin Low has been instrumental in the production of many of the National Film Board's more significant films. Mr. Low joined the NFB in 1945, after studying at the Banff School of Fine Arts and the Calgary Institute of Technology and Art. In 1950 he was appointed the Board's director of animation and in the ensuing years directed such films as Romance of Transportation, City of Gold, and Corral. Mr. Low produced and co-directed Universe, which has taken over two dozen awards in international competition. He was also co-director of Labyrinth at Expo 67. Since November 1972 he has been acting as an executive producer for the general English program of the NFB.

Recently I attended a convention of documentary film producers from African and Asian countries. I was not surprised to learn that certain feature film productions, particularly westerns, had been banned in some countries, partly because of racial overtones, partly because governments felt that the stimulus of violence was not conducive to general social welfare and stability.

I am a producer of documentary films. I've had little to do with the production of drama, but I am an avid consumer of dramatic films in all forms. For a long time I have been particularly interested in westerns and the changes that I have seen in the western film over the years.

When I was a child I lived in the ranching country of western Canada. It was still fairly close to the wild west of legend but the legends to us as children were the stories of our grandmother. Our grandmother came into southern Alberta in a covered wagon. She brought her family, as young children, 700 miles from the south in a covered wagon before there were roads. The legends to us were the stories about the time when the local toughs came over the border and shot out the transom in grandmother's living room. The oral tradition, yearns, tall tales, folk songs were still alive in the years before radio, at least before we had a radio. And books, which were not that plentiful, were expensive and did not for the most part, inhibit invention. On occasional Saturday afternoons, we saw movies in the small town theatre. The movies were infrequent enough to stand out in high relief in my memory. Tom Mix and later Hopalong Cassidy were the popular screen heroes of the period. The films seemed to be natural extensions of the folklore that we knew: a kind of interpretation that reinforced the ideas of courage stoicism, and simple frontier values, reflected in memories of the people of the local community. They were exaggerated tall tales, almost completely in

style with western verbal yearns and obviously universally popular. By this I do not mean that all folklore, all legends in mythology is objectively useful and appropriate for all societies. Far from it. Much folklore or legend is partisan or tribal just as the cowboy and Indian stories tended to reinforce the conviction of the white man that he had every right to bring civilization to the frontier. Some fo the oldest legends that survived from the ancient oral traditions are universal in character because they are concerned with fundamentals and these have survived for centuries before the advent of print and they seem to be adaptable to many cultures. The best of the cowboy legends represented the struggle of individual conscience against evil forces and insurmountable obstacles with no support from an indifferent or demoralized society. That is a universal story.

That cowboy and Indian films did not reflect any useful values to the Indian children who also shared the main street of my childhood town, and sometimes the theatre, was something I do not remember considering or thinking about as a child. And often, the simple morality tales of the western carried with them the broader implication of acceptable violence in that black and white world where bad men were all bad. Tarzan in the movies was also an intense cultural influence which shaped an attitude towards the world. I still have trouble with the implication of images which surfaced from those films - even

after having been in Africa. Still, those films, when not projecting the obvious racism that characterized many, were probably an enriching experience which expanded the world for us as children. Certainly, if the film did not satisfy fully our desires for experience, it was a taking-off point for endless days of play on adventure and inspiring themes. Since that time, the nature of films has been changing. When I was a child, the western had many real cowboy actors and some cowboy directors. But slowly this type of film began to draw inspiration from previous films as the real history receded into the distance. The western had become a profound international cultural influence. But now its audience was less and less critical of its tone, implication and subtle historical texture and more receptive to exaggeration and violence, providing that it was realistically staged. I am referred only to technical realism - the way a man collapses when struck by a bullet, or, more recently, the way his head explodes. At a certain point, I became aware of a profound mechanical quality of stories which seemed to be computerized versions of earlier films which were themselves versions of earlier films. The makers of these films seemed to have no experience of the original root. There was the advent of the Italian spaghetti western, the German western, the Spanish western -- with heroes who represented the enigmatic power in a surrealistic setting or in an exaggerated blood bath -- vaghely symbolic but superrealistic violence.

The morality tale had become an immorality tale.

There is, however, a symbiotic relationship between the consumers and the producers of this form of perverse mythology. Real mythology grows. Its social appropriateness is continously tested in an oral tradition. It is malleable, depending on the instincts of the teller and the response of his audience.

An audience in an earlier age would not allow an actor to outrage their sense of appropriateness. An artist had to have a finely adjusted antennae for what his audience would accept, in order to survive. Now there is a separation of audience from story teller. A celluloid barrier prevents an interaction with the audience and its television transmission further inhibits direct social communal interpretation when viewed by isolated individuals. When did you last hear a film booed or hissed in a theatre or in a living room? In my opinion, films often feature an outpouring of essentially antisocial and aggressive imagery which is out of context with the lives and social realities of most viewers. The isolating and alienating influences of urban compression are being reinforced by this media. The mind which is developing hatred, and growing alienated, is particularly receptive to a kind of self-justifying and self-pitying reinforcement. Mysterious power, supernatural luck, the sanction of higher forces, narcissistic posturing, and inhuman indifference to suffering and

death are all things which characterize certain westerns and many other films that we are now familiar with.

I know that violence is often the only recourse to justice in some intolerable conditions. But having, in one generation, inherited a global communication miracle, is it not criminally irresponsible to play continously the drums of warlike challenge, the shouts of revengeful triumph, even though these sounds may stir us most deeply? We are all children of some tribal heritage with all its noble history and bloody conflict. But now, we must discover broader loyalties to life. The music and language and image of our planetary messages must look beyond the memories of the enemies of forest, plain and mountain and see in other startled eyes the same shared visions.

What has one of the first expressions of the cinema become? Will all other expressions follow the same route in the search for the adrenalin kick? I do not think that box-office can be equated with audience response just as rating can only measure how many people look, and not what creative or destructive influence the programme had in broad social-human terms. The justification that people should be able to watch what they want becomes meaningless when real choice is, in the long run, limited, or when the overall situation that confronts the entire society is oen of grave danger. When artistic or cultural expression

becomes fixed by a form of iamge and sound recording, it is in danger of becoming a source for a second and third generation of expression. In this process the subtlety, truth or social intent that inspired the original will be lost or perverted. I think this is true of print as well as other media. So we return to the question of how the media can be molded, modified influenced in a living way by real people--with less distance between their more subtle reaction and the growing juggernaut of media machinery and systems which will mold society and culture to its own mechanical images. I am not attempting to ignore or denigrate the fine works of cinematic art we have witnessed and I believe the role of the artist is important in most cultures. What concerns me is the growing spectator culture which ultimately must be gross and crude, a culture in which people lose their initiative and motivation to engage actively in maximizing the creative potentials of their own lives. Film and art should inspire creativity, not inhibit and certainly not hypnotize. Cinema has always carried in it some dangers of the possibility of elite interpretation, the manipulation of attitudes, and the erosion of creative social instinct in individuals and groups. It has also been seen to be a positive educating force and social catalyst. The advent of television, which extends the cinematic image and makes it all-pervasive, magnifies dangers as it extends possibilities.

A culture which is rich, alive and broadly based can only be produced by the joyful participation of every man in that society. The great age of media which function as the nervous system of a healthy, vital and joyful society is yet to be.

Critical Perspectives On Violence as a Dramatic Convention in the Arts and Mass Media

Eli Mandel, who is presently a professor of Humanities and English at York University, is a native of Estevan, Saskatchewan, a Ph.D. graduate from the University of Toronto, and an author. Professor Mandel won the Governor General's award in 1962 for his book, Idiot Joy. His latest book is Stony Plain.

I want to begin with a couple of observations which have occurred to me since I've been here. In the introduction to Cases and Materials on the Control of Violence on Television in Canada, I find in the two introductory pages, something like ten examples of the use of words like "control", "prescription", "restriction", "prohibit", and "punitive"; in the "General Description" of the Symposium, one of the three themes given for discussion is control and improvement. Now, I don't want to reflect on the efforts of the Research staff (and I take it they do concern themselves with frameworks of reality) but the timidity of the approach, the fear implicit in the analysis seems to me not only symptomatic, but alarming.

If one is to take seriously pages six to eleven of Cases and Materials, I am alarmed. What is it that broadcasters and corporations and commissions and people like ourselves fear?

Why do we use words like "control" so consistently? What are we trying to control? Is it the audience? Is it ourselves, our own natures? Is it the media, the government, the effect? These seem to be questions that we haven't come to grips with, or that I don't see the background papers as coming to grips with.

My task is to talk about dramatic conventions in relation to the subject of violence. I think the subject raises a whole series of questions, of which I'll try to deal with three in particular. The first is the extent to which the conventional should be regarded as a means of detaching arts, or even formula drama, from reality. The second question. arising from this, concerns the opposite possibility: that conventions themselves are formative, either by altering our conceptions of ourselves or by distracting us from reality by dulling our sense of the particular. Third, whether in any sense mass media can be regarded as both the image and the effective technology of control and power. An image presented to an audience insistently, if not deliberately, at least is a cause of concern: the threat is not so much with the program as with the machine; what we're afraid of is not the stories, but the story telling.

What does it mean to say that violence, however defined, might be a dramatic convention in the arts and the mass media. Who

has been violated and where and how? Do we mean to say that art, like laughter or wit, may be a concealed form of assault? That it sublimates some urge to kill, that some sublimations are better than others, and some worse? These questions point to very difficult theoretical problems: the origin and function of dramatic genres, for example; the distinction between fantasy in its psychological sense and art in its formal sense; the difference between expectation and judgment in an audience. The subject we've got before us involves a sociology of art, a generic theory and a theory of value.

If we turn to the question of a sociology of art first, it seems to me one obvious difficulty is that, despite brilliant efforts by individual theorists, we do not possess anything that could be called a satisfactory sociology of art. How can you reconcile, for example, Freudian, Marxist, structuralist, and statistical approaches to the subjects? Without multiplying examples, I think it's fair to say that we can't do much more than guess about the functions of formalism and form itself.

Conventions of art, (the element of design, the element of form--creativity in that sense) remain a problematical element in our discussion. Art repeats itself in its form - fugue, sonata, symphony, sonnet, comedy, tragedy, detective story, western, thriller, police story, epic, lyric drama. Should we distinguish

between uses and intentions or between convention and anti-convention? Or begin with possible explanations of art as formal principles?

There's a comment in The Annotated Alice which seems to me to sum up a lot of what I'd want to say about conventions themselves. "If speech were not conventional, we could not understand one another", or so observes the annotator of Humpty Dumpty's remarks to Alice about the meaning of glory. If speech were only conventional, there could be no poetry. It follows then that conventions are both necessary and conservative. They enable communication by preserving form. To the extent that they're formal, they introduce elements of detachment, disinterest, unreality that we all recognize in fictions--the perfect gods of Irving Layton's "The Birth of Tragedy."

But if conventions indeed involve the conservative disinterestednexx of art, why then should conventions of violence disturb any good reader, listener or viewer? The genres of drama, of violent drama on television, in front of which millions sleep nightly in this country, descend with perfect respectability from romance sources. From the sacrificial and purgation tales emerges the detective story (or so W.H. Auden argues in The Guilty Vicarage); from grail quests comes the western story (observe the wasteland motifs which were deliberately written into "Have Gun Will Travel", where the knight is called Paladin,

and where he sings a song about wandering through a desert land); from displaced westerns, we get the thriller (according to Orwell and to Raymond Chandler, whose afterward to The Long Good-bye might prove to be the indispensable defence of the form itself); and from displaced thrillers, the police story. In its contemporary form as urbanized romance, the police action-drama is not at all an invention of our time except in its setting.

The above argument suggests that violent content becomes absorbed by formal expectations or generic considerations. At least once a century Ahab has to die again, even if Ishmael turns out to be Duddy Kravitz re-resurrected in a new role. But what does it mean to say, we repeat old forms? In The Guilty Vicarage, Auden suggests a very important distinction, between fantasy and art. Fantasy is the form in which we project guilt on others so that we feel innocent; art is the form in which we are disturbed by what we actually read or see.

It seems to me from that line of argument, what we should be asking is for not less, but more violence on television. We have not looked at 'Disasters of War' by Goya, at least not on television. We've turned our faces away from the reality that is art itself.

Jean Basile, television critic for Le Devoir

(Biography to follow)

Je vous parlerai de la violence en tant que convention dans les émissions dramatiques à la télévision. On aurait sans doute souhaité que je fasse une analyse de contenu des émissions telles que "Mannix" our "Cannon", que j'en dénombre les meurtres et les divertissements divers, et enfin, que je verse une larme hypocrite sur tout le sang et les coups de poing dont se délecte manifestement l'auditoire de la télévision à en juger par les cotes d'écoute.

Je n'ai pas l'intention de le faire, et ce pour un certain nombre de raisons. En premier lieu, je trouve que le problème de la violence est moins apparent sur les canaux français que l'on voit au Québec qu'il ne l'est sur les canaux anglais au Canada et, naturellement, sur les canaux américains. Ensuite, parce que, en tant que critique, je me suis toujours demandé si on pouvait juger des émissions de violence sans un point de comparaison très important, qui est le sexe. J'ai toujours pensé qu'il serait intéressant de voir sur deux canaux différents une émission de pure violence et une autre de pur sexe et, ensuite, obtenir les analyses des sentiments de l'auditoire, des cotes d'écoute; et c'est à partir de ce moment uniquement que nous aurions, à mon avis, un élément réel de comparaison et de l'intérêt du public.

Il faut convenir que la violence est présente à la télévision, même sur les écrans de télévision de langue française. Ce problème à mon avis, un point de morale politique. Les gouvernements sont-ils convaincus que la violence à la télévision est un exutoire nécessaire comme on l'entendait hier dans le film qui nous a été présenté? Et si c'est un exutoire, de deux choises l'une: ou bien on pratique la politique du laisser-faire, ou bien on considère que c'est une incitation directe à la bagarre et au crime, en fait, un élément de détérioration de notre morale collective, et on agit d'autorité. Mais, je me demande si, aujourd'hui, quiconque est capable d'agir d'autorité

pour interdire ce qui plaît finalement à des millions d'électeurs. J'irai même beaucoup plus loin. Avons-nour encore aujourd'hui une morale collective qui nous permette de juger sainement d'un problème aussi précis, aussi évident que la violence à la télévision? En fait, que je regarde la réalité d'une part, et quand je regarde la télévision d'autre part, et là je parle naturellement de la télévision diffusée en français au Canada, j'ai l'impression que nous sommes très en-deçà de ce que je peux voir dans la rue.

J'habite un quartier populaire à Montréal. Je vois les enfants se comporter dans la rue. Je les vois jouer, je les vois se battre, et j'ai l'impression que je n'ai jamais vu cette rue et ces éléments de réalité à la télévision pas plus que je n'ai vu des éléments spécifiques de violence présents sur l'écran reproduits dans la rue. J'ai l'impression que les enfants se sont toujours battus, qu'ils se battent encore aujourd'hui et qu'ils se battront toujours. Et la faute peut en être aussi imputée aux livres tout comme à la violence qui nous entoure, que ce soit la violence de la politique, celle de la polution ou celle de l'alimentation, bref une violence qui dépasse très largement, je pense, la simple télévision. Au fond, je crois qu'il nous faut admettre un principe de base très simple: la télévision commerciale se préoccupe avant tout de faire le plus d'argent possible, c'est une évidence.

Si la violence paie, par conséquent c'est qu'elle est bonne, à

condition naturellement qu'elle porte l'habit des bons; et c'est pour cela que nous assistons généralement à cette inversion incroyable que les "bons", dans les séries de violence, sont toujours plus violents que les "méchants" sous prétexte qu'ils doivent défendre la morale publique. Mais je dois quand même apporter un petit peu d'eau au moulin au niveau de la violence à la télévision et j'aimerais le faire pour élargir un petit peu les débats au niveau du medium lui-même, de la "morphologie" du medium.

Ainsi, en tant que critique de télévision, c'est-à-dire un monsieur qui regarde la télévision de nombreuses heures par jour, je me surprends de ne plus pouvoir distinguer la réalité de la fiction. J'ouvre la télévision le matin, je la ferme le soir, mais bientôt je serai capable de ne plus la fermer du tout parce que les émissions dureront vingt-quatre heures sur vingt-quatre. Et ce que je vois par ailleurs ce n'est pas une émission distincte, fût-elle violente, mais un continuum d'émissions qui contient aussi bien des émissions d'information avec des séquences de violence prises sur le vif, des séquences où je vois une vieille dame charmante qui commet un acte de violence sur une volaille en nous montrant comment dépecer un poulet, que des émissions sportives qui sont, de fait, des émissions violentes. On a vu cette année, par exemple, le hockey devenir littéralement une arène de boxe sans que personne, semble-t-il, ne se pose des questions

réelles sur ce sujet pas plus qu'on ne s'en pose, d'ailleurs, sur les dramatiques.

A mon avis, la télévision ne peut pas être séparée en petites émissions; il faut plutôt la considérer comme un tout organique. En d'autres termes, je me demande si la télévision, par sa programmation continue, en qui, pour moi, constitue l'émission véritable de la télévision, ne génère pas en elle-même une sorte d'organisme. Bien que cela puisse paraître un peu bizarre, j'ai souvent l'impression que la télévision a sa propre vie, qu'elle a une espèce de morale. En fait, nous avons tous l'impression que, parce que nous construisons des choses, ces choses-là vivent selon nos propres désirs. On a bien vu dans le cas des machines, par exemple, que ce n'est pas tout à fait vrai, qu'elles dirigent une usine autant que les directeurs. Je crois que la télévision, maintenant, en est là et que nous avons devant nous un organisme qui a ses règles, sa morale, et que nous devons la considérer en elle-même, par elle-même, sans essayer de lui apporter des critères anthropomorphiques qui lui sont, me semble-t-il, peu applicables. En d'autres mots, l'émission violente doit être considérée violente, non pas par rapport à notre morale conventionnelle, mais par rapport à celle du medium -- la morale du medium étant dégagée par l'ensemble des programmations. Prenons un exemple; si je vois une émission violente de style dramatique à la télévision, cette émission est-elle plus violente ou moins

violente que les séquences d'information que j'ai vues lors des journaux-parlés où, prenons l'exemple du "60" de Radio-Canada, l'on nous présente des scènes d'enfants qui meurent au Bangladesh et, autrefois, les scènes d'horreur du Vietnam? Je suis sûr que le public ne fait aucune différence entre ces deux scènes, c'est de la violence de toutes façons et c'est avec ces deux critères-là qu'il va juger de la relativité de la violence à la télévision. Je pense qu'on peut aller encore un tout petit peu plus loin au niveau de la morphologie du medium, et étant écrivain, j'attache une très grande importance aux mots. A mon avis, les mots ne signifient pas "rien". Ils révèlent une réalité profonde. Je me suis apperçu de deux choses qui m'ont paru intéressantes. Quand on parle de la télévision en tant qu'objet, en tant qu'outil, on appelle la partie de la lampe écran, qui est cathode, un canon d'électrons. Déjà, je trouve en cela que la télévision porte en elle une idée de violence. Ensuite, la marche des él ctrons de cette catholde sur la lampe écran s'appelle un "bombardement d'électrons". Je me dis alors: "comment se fait-il qu'un objet mort ait suscité, chez les créateurs de vocabulaire, des mots qui déjà impliquent la violence"? En ce sens, j'aimerais qu'on se pose sérieusement la question à savoir si la télévision n'est pas simplement l'outil possédant une certaine violence qui correspond au moment de la civilisation, qui est le nôtre, et qui, manifestement, est un moment de violence et de dépréciation des normes morales que nous sommes habitués à suivre d'après notre tradition...

Je me demande si nous ne devions pas aussi réfléchir un petit peu sur le sens de l'image qui porte peut-être en elle d'autres messages que ceux que nous voyons ordinairement. Je pense que nous sommes trop cartésiens. Nous voyons une image, nous en reconnaissons les signes, nous disons: "oh, c'est un homme qui tue une femme. Quelle horreur!". Mais n'y a-t-il pas derrière cette première image d'autres images qui pourraient naître de cette vie des électrons? De même que la violence chez l'homme se manifeste non seulement au niveau des gestes, par un coup de poing, une meurtre, mais encore au niveau de ses molécules ainsi que le montre Stéphane Lupesko dans son ouvrage "Energie de la matière vivante". Cette lutte moléculaire n'étant ni l'effet ni la cause des actes violents, mais une simple transformation énergétique nécessaire à la vie de la matière sur laquelle nous ne pouvons pas projeter anthropomorphiquement les états d'âmes de la psychologie humaine. De même il se peut qu'un appareil de télévision soit un champs de lutte électronique où se transforme une énergie propre sur lequel nous ne pouvons pas projeter l'état d'âme de notre psychologie humaine. Si cela est, il faut naturellement se poser la question à savoir si cette violence électronique, qui se situe en dehors de nous et sans référence à nos schémas moraux, peut être préjudiciable à l'homme, et si cela est, comment elle se manifeste et comment elle peut nous attaquer. J'ai lu en 1964 dans le "Time Magazine" un article assez intéressant à ce sujet. Dans cet article, on

exposait le résultat d'une série d'observations sur le comportement d'enfants regardant la télévision en moyenne de 3 à 6 heures par jour et 20 heures durant le week end. Ces enfants montraient des signes d'hyperactivité et d'agressivité, suivis de phases de léthargie. Cette expérience fut refaite sur des rats blancs que l'on exposa simplement devant les écrans de télévision. Ils montraient des signes identiques. Cependant, ni les enfants ni les rats n'avaient regardé des émissions particulièrement violentes. En fait, ils n'avaient regardé aucune émission. Ils avaient simplement été exposés à la télévision. En d'autres termes, ils avaient été soumis à un bombardement d'électrons qui, lentement, et sans qu'on puisse en voir le contenu, avait une action sur leur comportement quotidien. Enfin, en terminant, je pense qu'il faudrait déborder largement le fait du contenu pour en arriver à analyser le medium en tant qu'élément possible de violence sur l'être humain.

David Helwig is literary Manager of CBC Television drama. Born in Toronto, Mr. Helwig was raised there and also at Niagara-on-the-Lake. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto and Liverpool, a former Queen's University professor, and the author of four published books of poetry, a novel, a book of short stories and a documentary on criminals. He has also edited an anthology of new Canadian stories.

A critic is a certain kind of moral philosopher concerned with judgements that are particular rather than general, intuitive rather than systematic. Like the poet, he finds it hard to prove his usefulness, and like the philosopher, he will be accused, if he is good at his job, of heresy. My own consideration of the subject of this symposium has failed to convince me that television violence is an important issue. But it has convinced me that one of the many things this country needs is intelligent and committed criticism of the few hours of original television that we produce--and we do produce very few hours of original television.

I'm not sure how many people do object to violence on television, or how deeply felt such objections are. I suspect that most people recognize television violence as almost completely conventional. A television programme, like a movie, is a public ritual--"kiss, kiss, bang, bang," as Pauline Kael puts it--

and it seems to me that Eli has developed in an interesting way the kinds of problems that are involved in how we regard these conventions.

At present, the American public appears to be frightened of disorder. Those who have achieved a certain security and comfort fear that it will be taken from them. Rebels of various kinds, some from the best families, are eager to deny the social contract, to refuse assent to the fabric of civility. Television violence, it seems to me, merely provides a scapegoat for this kind of anxiety. The problem, which may or may not be a real one, is certainly an American one, and there is a danger that we have become so accustomed to thinking in American terms that we may be guilty of asking God for just a tiny riot, just a little unjust war, so that we may have the same great issues and difficult decisions. We are not better people than Americans. We are not wiser or surer or more just, but we are a different society in a different historical position. The health of Canadian society may well be more threatened by a premature decency than by a nihilistic rebellion. And if this nihilistic rebellion exists, it is not the product of a few television shows, but a phenomenon central to this technological society.

The phenomenon of television itself is for most of us an American phenomenon living among us. If we take a detached look at the phenomenon, we discover that for something like eighteen to twenty hours each day we have available a series of electronic impulses organized to provide a small and generally even nervous and emotional response. No programme is designed to create a response so strong that we would turn it off; none is deliberately organized to be altogether ignored. Television is by and large a habit, an anaesthetic. This is not a new insight, but it's one we often ignore. Television is constantly available and is generally predictable. The patterns of programming appeal to our delight and habit, same time next week.

If we seriously wish to change television, it seems to me, it would be well to begin by restricting the hours of broadcasting to possibly as few as three or four a day; and well to continue by making the content unpredictable so that it is not always the same material at the same time of the week. It seems to me that this would do a great deal more to change whatever the effect of television is than any kind of minor tinkering with the content of programmes. The constant availability of a stimulus is the real phenomenon of television.

Popular art has always been emotional, melodramatic, violent. It has often been obscene. There is nothing especially wrong

with these things. In fact, one of the problems of television violence is that no one is hurt, no one really dies, it does not make us confront our mortality. There was a very interesting article in the New Yorker by Michael Arlen a few months ago in which he talked about the lack of death on television, how all death on television was merely conventional, how one never confronted mortality in that medium. Popular art will always, I suspect, tread a difficult, thin line between dramatically simplifying life and merely flattering our nastier fantasies. But the attempt to control this, that is, the attempt to control the content of programmes rather than the ownership of broadcasting facilities, which is quite a different matter, will simply lead to a bureaucratic art which means, of course, no art at all. The best thing that can be done with or about the popular arts is to subject them to rigorous judgement which places them within the moral universe of our whole lives.

I return to my initial point. Canadian television needs intelligent and committed critics, and to have them is within the realm of the possible. Critics are among those important people who make good art popular, and popular art good. We legislate what should be said, and how it should be said, at our peril, but to refuse to legislate standards does not mean that standards do not exist, only that the standards by which any art is to be judged are too particular, too subtle for generalization.

A continuous public analysis, sensitive and hard-headed, can do our television no harm and possibly much good.

I would like to reinforce, to repeat and to agree with a point made by Professor Jowett last night when he talked about the economic imperative within commerical broadcasting which inevitably attempts to make a heterogeneous audience into a homogeneous audience. It seems to me that this is the crucial point in the consideration of the quality of television programming. Inevitably, and it does not matter who heads the American commercial networks, what they must do is make as much profit as possible -- that means sell as many commercials as possible, that means get as many people as possible watching not some part of their programming, but every part of their programming. The effect is of a lowest common denominator effect. We are programming, then, for a mass.

It is my belief, and it's a strongly held political opinion, that the mass does not exist until it is made to exist by those in power. What we have is a heterogeneous society, a majority which is merely an assembly of individuals, an assembly of minorities. Healthy broadcasting will programme for everyone in the country, one minority at a time; possibly, at times - although this is clearly economically impossible - for one person at a time. The mass only exists when it's made to exist by the economic forces around it.

PANEL DISCUSSION

In the discussion which followed several speakers questioned the merit of comparing television with traditional art forms while others attempted to differentiate between various forms of violence.

Judy LaMarsh, chairman of the Ontario Royal Commission into Violence in the Communications Industry, noted that literature, art and theatre have never been able to occupy millions of people's attention and time to the degree that television has. Miss LaMarsh expressed concern that not enough was yet known about the effect of extensive television viewing on an individual.

Marshall McLuhan says the medium is the message but he's not just talking about the bos, he's talking about the box plus the watcher. That's the real concern. What's the chemistry? What's different about what happens to people who are watching television? Isn't there something different about the quality of what happens over that enormously extended period of time?

Mr. Helwig suggested the questions Miss LaMarsh raised about the general effect of television were probably worthy of consideration than was the specific issue of violence on television.

My own children are not threatened by programmes of violence because they don't choose to watch them. I am not sure, however, that they are not threatened by television.

Dr. Robert Liebert, a professor of psychology at the State University of New York, disagreed with Mr. Helwig's view that his children could not be influenced by violent programmes.

Suppose for a moment, that there was just one child who could be influenced by television violence, and who lives down the street from you. Your child could be a victim of that child's action and thus be very much influenced by television violence. I think it is a very serious mistake to say that only those who watch television are potentially affected by it.

Jean Campbell, the director of early and basic education at the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation, suggested that in the past literature was written for a select few who had the skills to look at it and understand it. She expressed worry that television's massive audience may not possess the critical knowledge of the medium necessary to avoid being unduly influenced by it.

We teach children in school to read and to write. The two go hand in hand. They don't learn to read without writing.

On the other hand, we have people at home who are sitting watching a medium and they don't have the skills that go into producing or making that medium. Therefore, they have no skills with which to look and see whether it is credible or whether it is a great enlargement of life.

Lister Sinclair, vice-president CBC program and policy development, disagreed with Prof. Mandel's efforts at calling attention to the continuity between television and traditional art forms, suggesting that it is quite wrong to lump all possible forms of violence into one category. He noted that, like many other persons, he is often disturbed by the type of violence presented on television.

He does not object, however, to the very large amounts of violence found in such traditional dramas as Oedipus Rex. The different reactions, he suggested, were due to differences in the presentation and use of the violent material.

The real difference is that in the kind of tragedy that as intellectuals perhaps we admire, we feel that violence is seen as the cause of problems and not as the solution to problems. It is a view of society that I do not think we share any more and that makes it very hard, I think, to find a justification for it in our programming. The Greek and Elizabethan view essentially sees the universe as being in

order and the man of violence -- the MacBeth, the Oedipus -- throws that universe out of order and it is destiny itself that brings about the retribution. We don't have a retributive view of society anymore. What we see instead is the vendetta. And popular films such as Straw Dogs show violence as a solution rather than violence bringing about a problem. It is this sort of distinction that we have to be making - the distinction which Shaw puts admirably in the preface to St. Joan in which he says the play will not be of interest to people who simply want to see a young girl burnt to death but it may be of interest to people interested in why she was burnt to death.

Bruce Raymond, agreed with Mr. Sinclair, suggesting the Symposium should not be considering violence per se, but rather the perversion of violence which he described as "brutality".

By brutality, I do not necessarily mean the kind of brutality of Straw Dogs or the kind of brutality of the Munich Games. I am talking of any demeaning of the human spirit either physically or psychologically. I would call any game show which panders exclusively to greed as a demeaning brutalization of the human spirit.

Mr. Raymond noted that 2500 years ago Plato discussed the same problem in Book II of The Republic.

He and his group sat around and tried to determine how they could bring about the perfect republic. They spent a long time trying to decide whether the stories of the gods as told to the children of Greece were not too bloody and gory to implant in the children the proper social attitudes that would make them perfect citizens. At the end of the tenth book of The Republic, Plato and Socrates and the others had still not come up with an answer. I think they decided it was futile.

The Treatment of Violence in Information Programming

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We live in a complex society in which the vast majority of our experience of the larger environment comes to us not directly but through some process of selection by media which thereby transforms the reality transmitted to us.

Our concern has been heightened in the last decade in North America as civil disorder, serial violence and terrorism

escalated. News media have been linked to riots, mass murders, and political assassinations by psychopaths and organized terrorists. Some of the major ways by which mass media -- and particularly television -- are believed to have influenced reality have included providing perpetrators of violent acts a forum to spread their views through the commission of publicized outrages; by priming a population of a city facing civil disorder, stimulating them by photodramatic past riots, by amplifying agitators' voices, by showing techniques, by indicating locations, by transforming norms; revealing to potential unstable personalities or dangerous individuals things to which they would not ordinarily have access: instructions on atom bomb making, "inside information" to the FLQ, etc; planting skyjacking (and other abduction and ransom notions) methods and ideas; glorifying certain acts of terror as in the case of the beauty shop mass murderer a few years ago who, following Speck, wanted a publicized place in history; increasing public indifference to violent crime, as in the Kitty Genovese incident.

This concern has been transformed into inquiries superintended by a number of commissions in the U.S., including the Kerner Commission which looked into civil disturbances in general and included some analysis of the role of the media, the Eisenhower Commission which addressed itself to violence in

general, and the contributions of the mass media. This was followed in the U.S. by the Surgeon-General's Report, Television and Social Behavior, based on this committee's work between 1969 and 1971. The latter was marked by some controversy over the composition of tis governing group and by its lack of attention to television news and violence.

But there are reasons for the lack of inquiry into violence and information programming that go beyond the purported influence of the industry, for I think we are somewhat unclear in our vision of what the news industry is or should be. (In this sense I am reminded of the cases of multi-billion dollar enterprises that have commissioned lavish research to tell themselves who they are!) Our lack of clarity stems from ambivalence; on one hand, our traditional view of press freedoms in a democratic society constrains us; yet we are aware that television, particularly, is different: it has acquired a power to convince us unparalleled in the history of media. As Bradley Greenberg's research in low income and ghetto areas in the U.S. put it, it is more depended upon and more believed; television news "depicts life the way it really is." Other research on the credibility of television news compared with newspapers shows a distinct trend: in 1959, people more often believed a newspaper story, but by 1968 more than twice as many Americans were "most inclined to believe" television.

This fact--that we depend upon it so completely for our essential view of world reality, that it reaches and influences so many more than other news media, that it may approach the status of a utility such as phone service, power and water--way qualify television news for some form of heightened control. The question further depends (at least with respect to violence) on three further considerations which cannot be considered independently of each other. Is the environment portrayed an unbiased reproduction from a universe of events? Is the meaning of purportedly violent representations transmitted to and interpreted by the audience what we assume? Has it an effect, and if so, what kind?

These questions are relevant in their own right but are also intertwined with our attempt to identify who or what an information medium such as television is. And this is pertinent to any discussion of controls.

Controls may be external or internal; if the internal controls are weak or insufficient, there is an invitation to imposition of external controls. Since the information industry claims many, and in fact, some would say more than, the prerogatives and privileges of such other enterprises as medicine, law, engineering, I am deliverately choosing to compare it with

such professions -- professions in which self-government is especially strong. As in those endeavors, the client does accept its product on faith -- in a society that increasingly compels us to depend upon it for certainty.

The dimensions I perceive as relevant to this rough model for comparison are those which distinguish the professional from the market ethic.

The first dimension of the professional ethic deals with the well being of the client -- which should be the primary concern; the second is that the professional will operate objectively for that good, without personal involvement or personal interests conditioning his action, and the third is that such action presupposes an objective selection of actions which are based upon the universe of symptoms, laws, structural principles, etc. Rather than market demand, e.g., what the patients or clients wish to hear, the professional tells the client what his objective findings are.

The market ethic simply operates on the premise that market conditions are met. The operator makes or stocks what a population wants, attempts to sell the client what is most profitable. Selection will be based on that, and of course, caveat emptor -- the buyer must himself be careful -- the

buyer must himself be careful -- the responsibility is in great part lodged with him.

These are pure types, of course, with plenty of deviations: the quack doctor and unethical lawyer are departures from the professional ethic, just as the merchant is operating a distance from the market ethic when he insists on selling one a lower-priced item that fits one's needs more adequately. But they are deviations. The most severe deviations from the professional ethic might be the physician who feeds medicine to the patient for the purpose of making him sick so he may be treated, the lawyer who arranges for his client to commit a crime so that he may collect a fee for defending him. The analogy with respect to television news is that television influences events to happen that ordinarily would not.

Many such cases are on the record; the most blatant type of example is that of the television news crew which encouraged boys to commit acts of violence for the camera at the Watts riot, as described by Conot in Rivers of Blood, Years of Darkness. Not as obvious but at least as effective in creating the events to be reported on is the Skinnerian reinforcement being carried on, as in Austin, Texas in 1970 when a mass protest became unexpectedly peaceful, leading network TV crews to pack up and leave without covering the story.

While the first type of influence is obvious and would be scorned as unethical by many information broadcasters, the second type, subtler but perhaps more pervasive, would not raise questions. But what is the real difference between asking boys to display violence on camera and waiting and selecting out those events that are not violent? Why should not a march of 20,000 people against the Cambodian invasion be as significant when peaceful unless a market ethic is operating?

I would argue, as a complex working hypothesis, that our reality ratios (vis a vis violence) are in part the product of a market ethic and that the most powerful effect such ratios have on the human psyche is to transform preceding normative structures. This seems to be the most lightly attended phenomenon of all the research done on media violence, yet the evidence for it from indirect sources compels us to look at it more closely.

Consider, for a moment, each of the following. Strange-sounding names, unacceptable at first, become familiar and finally acceptable... Classical music played for non-likers and jazz repeatedly played for non-likers, both come to be accepted with repetition. When pedestrians observe others jaywalking, they then increase their own illegal behaviour to eight times

as often... We see a parking space in an illegal zones and notice others are parked in the no-parking zone. Otherwise law-abiding, we park. In 1964, 87% of U.S. blacks believed riots were harmful. After five years of exposure (much of it via television news), only 29% continue to believe they are harmful. Films of subincision (sexual mutilation) rites with time come to be less disturbing.

The mechanism working here is one we are all acquainted with and underlies much of generic change. First we are shocked by something new, unacceptable or strange. Repetition leads to emotional habituation or "familiarization" as some psychologists refer to it. Ultimately, our normative framework changes. After norms change and behaviour is tolerated and then acceptable, the performance of it by others is facilitated. As Professor Otto Larson put it in one of the Eisenhower Commission reports:

> "The critical possibility is that the acceptance of violence can make those who accept it a party to the occurrence of violence by making those who are inclined to engage in violence act in ways they sense to be socially tolerated, approved or even expected."

Because we are not yet knowledgeable about the internal changes in humans engendered by information programming, we cannot clearly understand the mish-mash of findings, of

contradictions relating to the change or persistence of external behavior. And while a great deal of work has been done in categorizing manifest content, we do not have, in the work on violence, sufficient data on the meaning of the message to the audience, messages we assume mean one thing but which may have diverse actual meanings to the public.

The research findings so far have been attempts to find out if what we believe an audience perceives can be linked causally to direct aggressive/violent behavior. The findings have often been questioned because of the difficulties -- methodological and ethical, among others -- of measuring the dependent variable, some act of aggression, not to mention the applicability of laboratory findings to real life. In real life, however, the changes of broadest importance are likely to involve the intervening variable which has thus far been given short shrift -- the sociological variable, changes in norms that underly and predispose to violent behavior for most of the population.

I would argue that it is logically more defensible at this point to begin to assess those changes, because I think this is where information programming is most likely implicated. I don't doubt that there are other phenomena at work as well -- such as stimulus-response events, but I think that normative changes underly many of these as well.

In summary and conclusion, I have argued that there has been scattered but compelling empirical evidence for concern with the role of television news, that because of our dependence on it and the prerogatives of the industry derived from the assumed non-elective nature of its product, the underlying concern with controls, which must be one reason for the present session, may be addressed by examining the ethic of the industry, and that part of this inquiry may be conditioned by the issue of how the events are selected. They in turn condition a "reality ratio" and this reality ratio has the potential power to change norms, the overall structure of which inhibits or facilitates expressed behavior. Although limits of space have, I must admit, engendered some question begging as well as precluding detailed description of possible research into the norm changing capability of televised information programming, we are in a good position in Canada to be able to assess such changes.

More than implicit in what I have said is the potential linkage between the mode of selection of news, violence content, its effects and a consequent concern with control.

There are hard issues to confront directly, for as Pamela Hansford Johnson has pointed out in her essay on the Moors murder trial:

"It is quite difficult to ask even a simple question about the whole problem of licence today... There are few intellectuals indeed who will lend themselves to serious discussion of whether, by mass communications, we are not poisoning that air -- whether due to its stench, some people die; children brutally killed -- or eight nurses slaughtered in Chicago. What is liberty worth without self control?"

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Economic objectives are legitimate. However, the needs of a civic society must have equal place. A responsible, participant society needs to be aroused by the objective importance of an event and not by the means with which the event is portrayed.

The U.S. Surgeon General's report on violence demonstrated that media violence has a moderate, but real tendency to encourage violent behaviour. However, the same report showed that violent behaviour need not take place if violent news stories are properly interpretted for the audience.

Other research shows that people can become inured to crises, desensitized to problems. A society that becomes inured to artificial crises may not know how to cope with genuine crises.

The economic pressure towards dramatic and fictionalized news discourages the networks from spending money on researchers that could otherwise be spent on technology or camera crews. The visual element gets priority over the informational element.

Television is anxious to get exciting film even if the film is staged. It is known that a significant amount of the film on Vietnam was staged by the U.S. Army for the American networks.

Those who defend Canadian television may say that there is more aggression and violence on U.S. T.V. than in this country. Professor Singer's work five years ago showed this tendency. However, a student of mine repeated Professor Singer's research this year and found that Canadian T.V. news was no longer less conflictual.

Now, for some recommendations. First, as a gesture towards truth and as a possible limit on violence, television news should be prohibited from employing staged film. Secondly, the networks should be discouraged from portraying violence that is non-essential to a news story. The networks have a vested interest in conflict, but society has a vested interest in cooperation. Thirdly, networks should be encouraged to reduce the number of news stories per programme and devote

more attention to each. Fourthly, the networks should bring coherence to their news broadcasts by choosing story sequences that make sense and by indentifying relationships among the stories. If McLuhan is right that the medium is the message, then the message of network news is that the world is chaotic and unfathomable.

Docteur en sciences politiques de l'Université de Paris, Denise Bombardier a récemment publié un livre à Paris, "La Voix de la France", qui a causé une certaine sensation dans les milieux de la radiodiffusion en France. Journaliste animatrice du magazine de politique étrangère de Radio-Canada, "Présence internationale", Denise Bombardier a récemment contribué à des projets de recherche, en collaboration avec les gouvernements français et belge.

Les journalistes qui sont allés à l'école ont tous retenu l'histoire de leurs confrères et messagers, d'il y a deux ou trois mille ans, assasinés lorsqu'ils avaient le malheur de rapporter au tyran ou autre potentat une mauvaise nouvelle. Il paraît même que quelques-uns de ces journalistes pionniers avaient fini par trouver le moyen d'éviter l'accident, le travail mortel, en créant deux styles de narration: le style euphémique et le style dramatique. Le premier faisant passer la nouvelle en douce, le second rendant le récit si passionnant que le public finissait par oublier la nouvelle elle-même, pâle copie de la nouvelle recréée. Dans les deux cas, le syle subordonnait le fond. Aujourd'hui les confrères, gardant en mémoire nos premiers martyrs de la profession, parlent de contenant et de contenu de medium et de message. La télévision, comme notre messager, véhicule des faits, des faits de réalité. Mais, aussi comme le messager, elle a tendance à les réaménager.

D'abord, elle le fait en fonction de ses caractéristiques propres, c'est-à-dire une tendance au spectaculaire et à faire appel à la sensibilité avant de faire appel à la raison. Outre ces deux caractéristiques, elle doit aussi tenir compte de la fugacité du message, de la limitation de temps, etc... ce sont les contraintes de la technique télé-visuelle. S'ajoutent à cela les contraintes de l'institution qui la contient, laissant une plus ou moins grande liberté de manoeuvre, une plus ou moins grande place dans l'horaire en fonction de la hiérarchie des valeurs de cette institution. Enfin, il y a les contraintes culturelles. Le message est réaménagé selon des critères soit moraux, - il ne faut pas choquer le public, heurter ses convictions, - et alors on utilisera le style euphémique; soit de rentabilité - ce qui frappe davantage, attire le plus grand public, augmente la cote d'écoute - et alors on maximisera la situation conflictuelle.

L'un et l'autre ne font pas place à l'information qu'il faut bien appeler "idéale", celle qui, respectant l'essentiel du message, le présente sans lui enlever son impact et sans le pervertir. La violence dans nos émissions d'information, nous ne l'inventons pas. Elle nous vient de l'actualité, des souffrances et des tyrannies des hommes. Le F.L.Q., ce ne sont pas les journalistes québécois qui l'ont inventé. Ce ne sont pas eux, non plus, qui ont décrété la loi sur les

mesures de guerre. La violence est l'aboutissement d'un manque de justice ou d'imagination. La violence n'est pas le fait des journalistes, elle est le fait des pouvoirs: pouvoir politique, pouvoir patronal, pouvoir syndical, pouvoir culturel. Bien sûr, même si le choix de maximiser les conflits est un choix de culture, de la culture dans laquelle baigne le medium, la responsabilité des journalistes ne disparaît pas pour autant. Il faut bien admettre que, dans la présentation de l'information télévisée, l'utilisation gratuite de la violence est souvent inversement proportionnelle à la compétence du communicateur. Bien sûr, il y a les "hot lines", les "hot seats" et les "hot-shows". Mais dans une société comme la nôtre, où l'on crie sur tous les toits que l'effort intellectuel n'est pas une valeur en soit, qu'apprendre des connaissances nouvelles doit se faire sans douleur, sans effort, comme fumer du "pot", quel combat pour un journaliste que de tenter d'expliquer sans démagogie ce fait qu'est la violence. Voir et regarder s'entre-déchirer le peuple portugais, voir ces enfants irlandais lapidés par des soldats britanniques, n'est-ce-pas plus attirant qu'une entrevue d'analyse politique?

La violence dans l'information télévisée? Faux problème, en quelque sorte. La violence comme expression de notre culture, voilà ce qu'il faut discuter réellement. Mais, comme je ne suis pas partisane de l'explication globaliste et trop systématique,

je veux bien continuer de scruter notre façon de présenter l'information. A mon sens, l'utilisation à outrance de sigles dans le vocabulaire de l'information est, dans une certaine mesure, une façon de violenter le public en créant une barrière d'incompréhension entre lui et des réalités dans lesquelles il est quotidiennement plongé. Le ton inquisitorial de certaines émissions, surtout au réseau anglais - je dois bien le préciser - où le journaliste tente de se substituer à un quelconque tribunal du peuple - et l'on sait ce qu'historiquement ont valu les tribunaux populaires - est également une manière de violenter le public. Je pense, également, à la place faite aux émissions d'information, dans certaines stations de télévision et en particulier dans les chaînes privées, où, à cause du peu de budget, on offre peu d'information, une information de qualité moindre au public, ça aussi, c'est une façon de violenter le public. A vrai dire, il faut admettre que la télévision canadienne, et plus particulièrement les chaînes françaises, ne projette pas une image de violence systématique comme ce peut être le cas aux Etats-Unis. L'explication qui me semble la plus plausible, du moins en partie, est que les journalistes des chaînes anglaises doivent concurrencer les journalistes des chaînes américaines, donc adopter le ton de leurs confrères américains s'ils veulent soutenir cette concurrence. En ce sens, la violence n'est certes pas un des problèmes majeurs de notre télévision,

contrairement aux journaux et à la radio qui, par le biais des faits divers, alimentent en violence l'information. La télévision, parce qu'elle fait peu ou pas de place au traitement du fait divers, - meurtres, accidents ou catastrophes -, échappe à ce piège. Personnellement, je serais portée à penser qu'une des premières formes de violence en information est qu'elle soit véhiculée et analysée par des communicateurs incompétents ou partisans. Et quand je parle de communicatuer, je ne parle pas seulement de celui qui est à l'antenne, je parle de tous ceux qui sont impliqués dans cette communication. Nous détenons, nous journalistes, ce pouvoir d'informer. Lorsque nous en abusons par manque de qualité professionnelle, par manque de formation, par manque d'éthique ou par partialité, nous violentons notre public. De la même façon, lorsque l'homme politique, le dirigeant patronal, le dirigeant syndical tentent de contourner le jeu démocratique de la libre-circulation des informations, dénoncent les journalistes en vue d'en faire des boucs émissaires ou essaient de faire pression sur eux, je considère qu'en dernier ressort ils violentent le public. Un journaliste qui s'auto-censure, parce qu'une partie de l'information qu'il détient ne coïncide pas avec ses opinions politiques; un homme politique qui fait pression sur un journaliste pour qu'il ne dise pas toute la vérité - et la façon de faire pression prend des formes très "glamorisées" - ces deux personnes posent, à mon sens, des gestes de violence. Dans notre société,

l'utilisation de la violence physique est anachronique sauf parmi la pègre et la police. C'est de la violence morale qu'il faut se préoccuper maintenant. Traquer un invité en entrevue, donner ex cathedra une information douteuse, affirmer une vérité comme si c'était "La vérité", voilà comment, à mon sens, le journaliste peut être violent. Mais n'est-ce pas là le comportement de trop d'hommes de pouvoir? Ou de femmes? Je le déplore, car je crois que le journaliste doit être autre chose qu'un homme ou une femme de pouvoir. Quant à la télévision, elle n'existe que par la culture qui la contient. Dans une société où le dollar est roi et la violence rentable, les émissions en sont le reflet. Dans une société où les rapports interpersonnels et de groupes ne se déroulent souvent plus que sur le mode de l'affrontement, l'information véhiculée est présentée sur ce même mode. La télévision, si elle ne doit pas maximiser ces conflits, ne peut, tout de même, pas les automatiser. Dans cette perspective, la télévision n'a aucun pouvoir et l l'information télévisée aucune influence réelle en matière de changement social. Ceci est une constation, bien sûr, et non un souhait ou un espoir.

Panel Discussion

Several journalists and television news executives reacted sharply to the criticisms of news programming made by professors Winn and Singer.

Bill Cunningham, vice-president of News and Public Affairs for the Global Television Network, stated he couldn't think of a network news executive in Canada or the United States who would not immediately fire any news crew caught staging events for film.

He felt television's sometimes graphic depiction of riots, bombings and wars simply provided the public with a true account of these events.

In the last twenty years, I and my colleagues have been in Vietnam, in Bangladesh, in Watts and in Harlem. Are you suggesting for a moment that these things should not be covered or that they can somehow be covered non-violently?

In Mr. Cunningham's opinion, any attempts to shelter viewers from the violent aspects of a news story would falsify their perception of the event and hinder their ability to come to grips with it.

Knowlton Nash, chief CBC news and public affairs, raised the question of whether there are some positive aspects to showing violence on television news. Mr. Nash noted that Vietnam had been refered to as the "living room war". For the first time, the violence and horror of war was brought, by television, into the living rooms of literally hundreds of millions of people. He also recalled that during one of the American civil rights confrontations of the sixties, millions of television viewers watched as a police officer in Selma Alabama let loose a pack of dogs on civil rights marchers.

Both of these incidents had a profound effect in stimulating mass concern about issues which in turn led to government action. I think showing the violence of the war in Vietnam had a not insignificant part in ending the war in Vietnam.

Tom Gould, vice-president of news for CTV, agreed with Mr. Nash that news coverage of violence can have a positive effect. He suggested police in the Southern United States haven't dared use dogs on people since coverage was given to the incident in Selma. He further suggested television coverage may be helping to solve the problem of airplane hijacking.

If we remember back, before television coverage, there was a man who put a bomb on an Air Canada aircraft to blow up his wife

and collect the insurance money. There was minimal security even after that bombing. There was no security at airports. There is today. Further, when you look at what has happened to the whole skyjacking story, you realize there is only one solution to the problem of skyjackers and its an international agreement not to provide sanctuary. Today the heat is on. There are only a few countries left in the world that provide sanctuary and Cuba is now changing her approach.

Mr. Gould disagreed with the suggestion journalists should examine in advance the possible implications of the coverage they give a particular event.

We know a story when we see one but we never, I suggest to you, stop to consider what the impact of that story might be. And that is a healthy thing. I once had a call from a University man who asked what surveys I undertake before doing a documentary programme. I said none. If we knew what people wanted we would be in a position to manipulate and that isn't our function.

Mr. Singer questioned the validity of the claims made by Mr. Nash and Mr. Gould. Having surveyed American opinion polls dealing with public support for the Vietnam war, he found that in 1970, despite over five years of extensive television coverage, acceptance of the war was close to an all-time high.

As far as the question raised by Tom Gould dealing with Algeria and Cuba, it is probable that the Prime Minister of Algeria and the Premier of Cuba are not getting their signals from CTV but are instead involved in a trading process with diplomats from other countries.

Ken Sobol, a free-lance writer and journalist, noted that while journalists are quick to praise their coverage of race riots, Vietnam and Selma, none of these events had taken place in Canada.

I would like to know whether the news people feel that they achieved the same degree of impartiality and forthright reporting in the 1970 FLQ crisis. Or were certain other elements, controls exerted on them that are not exerted elsewhere?

Peter Trueman, A Global Television news reporter, felt he had been less stringent in covering the 1970 crisis than he had been on several other assignments.

I've found after twenty years in journalism the things I regret most I would classify as sins of omission rather than commission. Some of the ommissions I made in my capacity as producer of the CBC National News at that time I regret. We were, I think,

stampeded by the government and through the efforts of one particular broadcast executive who over-zealously interpreted the government's suggestion for caution.

Mr. Trueman felt however, that the present preoccupation with violence could lead to similar sins of ommission. Decisions to suppress scenes of violence would be far more dangerous for both newsmen and the public than a "publish or be damned philosophy".

Garth Jowett asked the Global representatives to comment on one of their recent stories which, he said, centred around whether or not a race riot was going to take place in a Toronto suburb.

There was a very dramatic twenty second demonstration by some young teenage thug on how to use Kung Foo sticks, in which the cameraman focussed very dramatically on him. At the end of the interview, the camera zoomed in on a stick being held by another one of these thugs. In all, about a five minute report.

Jowett felt the incident profided a prime example of a "pseudo event": a story which is not really an event until made so by the mass media.

Mr. Cunningham admitted that he too had been concerned when he saw the story.

My reaction was to think that we may be making that particular problem worse. I agree, I think we used bad judgement in that instance and the reporter had that pointed out very forcefully to him.

Denise Bombardier noted the French language television newscasts in Canada do not contain as much violent content as is found on English Canadian newscasts. She suggested the difference may reflect the failure of Canada's English networks to resist American influence.

Le Canada est un pays culturellement différent des Etats-Unis et je crois qu'il est, dans la mesure ou la violence au Canada est infiniment moins importante que la violence aux Etats-Unis. Je ne comprend pas pourquoi vos émissions de télévisions refletent tant de violence, sinon parce que vous ne savez pas résister à la culture télévisuelle américaine.

Kaes Van den der Kyden, Director of Research at Radio-Quebec, suggested the smaller amount of violence found on French-Canadian newscasts may reflect the tendency for French-Canadians to be less interested in international news events than English Canadians.

J'ai l'impression que la télévision et la radio québécoise est plus québécoise qu'internationale. Le journalist anglais rapporte une violence qui vient de l'extérieure parce qu'il est plus sensible à ça que le journalist québécois.

Symposium on Television Violence
Colloque sur la violence à la télévision

THE INFORMATION MEDIA'S DEPICTION OF REALITY*

*one of a series of papers prepared by the following researchers:

David Balcon
Michèle Baril
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Views expressed in these papers do not necessarily reflect those of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission

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Conseil de la Radio-Télévision Canadienne

THE FUNCTION OF THE NEWS MEDIA -- THE DEPICTION OF REALITY

"News" originally meant novelties or tidings of recent events. The word newspaper did not come into use until the middle of the seventeenth century, when those associated with newsletters began to make a concerted effort to chronicle current events quickly and directly. Scouts were hired to collect information which was then organized into newsheets by the journalists of the day who were variously known as coranteers, diurnalists, gazetteers and mercurists.[1]

The news service that we receive today, whether by newspaper, radio or television, owes much to certain technical improvements which came about in the first half of the nineteenth century. These included the conversion of the hand printing press (invented by Gutenberg in 1440) to steam in 1810, the utilization of the telegraph system for the dispatching of messages in the 1830s, and the creation of the first wire service in 1846.[2]

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[1]Anthony Smith, The Shadow in the Cave, A study of the relationship between the broadcaster, his audience and the state (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1973), pp. 91-2.

[2]Smith, pp. 92, 94

Over the years, the news media have devised a number of generally accepted criteria for selecting which facts and methods of presentation are most appropriate. Anthony Smith, in The Shadow in the Cave, lists eight:

1. the recency (newness) of the event, which "contains an inbuilt bias against explaining the previous events which had led to a new development";

2. geography (relevance for the intended audience) which "tends towards a bias on the side of authority" especially in terms of national news, and favours "the activities of government and its principal personalities...(and) people and things already well known";

3. the continuity of a long-running story, particularly if it reinforces audience expectations;

4. appeal to a mass audience through formula-stories "which confirm... stereotypical images";

5. events which are technologically appropriate for the medium -- for example, television needs "dramatic filmable rituals, processions, disasters, stories which involve grief-striken faces, collapsing buildings, great fires and fiestas. These will inevitably gain some kind of imaginative precedence over stories which relate to finance or education and are much harder to realize in visual terms.";

6. the programme structure within the news itself -- "stories will be chosen which help to provide a pattern within the structure.... as in any other creative narrative exercise";

7. the non-specialist or interdisciplinary approach -- "reporters will emphasize the more easily comprehensible aspects of a situation, as well as the 'human' elements and the non-technical";

8. "the believed public mood of the moment".[3]

The employment of such criteria, which are based on certain "known and obvious conventions and conditions" of the communications media, has contributed to certain commonly held criticisms of television as a journalistic medium.[4]

> The nature of sight-sound, edited presentation in the medium heightens and attenuates the more surface, visceral aspect of conflict and confrontation in our civilization...
>
> As the level of irrationality in an event rises, so television's record of it "heats up", and the camera begins to exchange momentum as it were, with the forces at work within the very situation it is supposed to be recording.
>
> The medium undoubtedly tends to reward both personality and personability in those who are involved in or actually present the news....

The North American news media are also encumbered with the burden of being, in the words of Robert Baker and Sandra Ball, directors of the Task Force on Mass Media and Violence,[5] "the central institutions in the process of inter-group communication".

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[3] Smith, pp. 103-6

[4] William Bluem, introduction to To Kill a Messenger: Television News and the Real World, by William Small, a Communication Arts Book (New York: Hastings House, 1970).

[5] Robert K. Baker and Dr. Sandra J. Ball, Mass Media and Violence, vol xi, Report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), pp. 33-4.

The authors of this Report to the (U.S.) National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, then go on to quote Walter Lippman on the awesome responsibility of the press in a democracy:

> As social truth is organized today, the press is not constituted to furnish from one edition to the next the amount of knowledge which the democratic theory of public opinion demands.... When we expect it to supply such a body of truth, we employ a misleading standard of judgement. We misunderstand the limited nature of news, the illimitable complexity of society; .... (and put) upon the press the burden of accomplishing whatever representative government, industrial organization, and diplomacy have failed to accomplish. Acting upon everybody for thirty minutes in twenty-four hours, the press is asked to create a mystical force called 'public opinion' that will take up the slack in public institutions.

Continuing in this vein, the Report suggests that "the purpose of communicating news should be to reduce uncertainty and to increase the probability that the audience will respond to conflict and change in a rational manner."[6]

News is no longer simply the recitation in bulletin form of facts about what is happening now -- violence and disorder, natural disasters, and the deliberations of public administrative bodies.

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[6] Baker and Ball, p. 36.

It has become a genre, a literary kind (like drama, epic, ode, novel, or sermon) with its own conventions of content and form. The subject matter of news is reports of the events, issues, conflicts and problems of the day; the techniques used are those of inquiry investigation, exposure and assessment. The news provides us with information about "reality", and yet it does so in a highly compressed manner.

As the mass media have become more sophisticated technically and politically, the news media have taken upon themselves a didactic role in society. By informing a mass audience about the important events of the day, they in fact create and sustain a necessarily circumscribed picture of society.

CONSTRAINTS UPON THE DEPICTION OF REALITY

The media do not exist in isolation. They operate under various systems of ownership, management and control within society. The material they present is intended to appeal to large numbers of the available audience, (generally regarded as a mass audience).

This audience consists of individuals who differ in age, education, interests, degrees of sophistication and social and economic status.

Despite these variables, the aim of each mass medium is to attract and retain the largest possible audience. This fact necessarily implies certain restrictions on the content and treatment of material. Other limitations are imposed by government regulation, self-censorship, legal prohibition, competition from other media, the pressures of private commercial enterprise, professional codes, and the creative and technical constraints inherent in each medium.

Anthony Smith and William Small have each discussed some of the innovations in the techniques of news presentation that have contributed to television's presentation of news as entertainment. For Smith, most of these changes took place during the decade 1958-68.[7] With the advent of television, it was no longer adequate simply to read news reports "from a sheaf of wire service tapes". In order to attract and hold the audience, the news had to be visualized. As newscasts became longer, from fifteen to thirty minutes, the news journalist began to emerge as a major national figure. The magazine format was often used to tell a story; the ninety second headline report was lengthened to a feature of several minutes. Reporters became known for their individual style and for "hard-hitting interviewing", especially when confronting figures of authority.

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[7] Smith, pp. 77-8.

In To Kill a Messenger, William Small speaks [8] of the journalist's job as the attempt "to determine what is real" -- Walter Lippman's "search for 'reportable' truth".

> Examining substance in the daily press or on the air reveals that much or almost all of what we call news is not really that, not in the sense of news as spontaneous happening. Most of 'news' is contrived, planted, managed, massaged, manipulated but it is still 'news' in that the men reporting it are not managed, manipulated or themselves contriving. Their vision is one of fairness and honesty.

Small relates that the first modern interview with a major public figure is purported to have been that between Horace Greeley and Brigham Young in Salt Lake City in 1859, and he considers this as merely the first in a series of journalistic devices [9] that "frequently shape or re-shape happenings".

> The interview led to the press conference and the initiative shifted from the press to the politician.... A step from news conference -- which permits the press to raise questions which do not always please the interviewee -- is the news release, a means to eliminate the questions. If the release contains news, the content is controlled by the source to a considerable degree. Certainly the embargo, the time of release, is his.... The release itself, however, is not a real event. It may be pertinent, it may be important, it may bear upon real events but in itself, it is manufactured.

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[8] Small, pp. 282-5.

[9] Here, Small is borrowing from Prof. Daniel Boorstin's theory of the "pseudo-event"; cf., D.J. Boorstin, The Image -- A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (New York: Harper's Colophon, 1961)

With television then, the reporting of information has involved "the instantaneous mingling of theatre with the dissemination of actuality".[10] This perception of news has been the subject of numerous directives from broadcast executives to their staff that have virtually achieved the status of news policies. The following quotation [11] is from a lengthy memorandum prepared in 1963 by Reuven Frank shortly after he was appointed executive producer of the NBC Evening News.

> Every mass story should, without any sacrifice of probity or responsibility display the attributes of fiction, of drama. It should have structure and conflict, problem and denouement, rising action and falling action, a beginning, a middle, and an end. These are not only the essentials of drama; they are the essentials of narrative....
>
> The highest power of television journalism is not in the transmission of information but in the transmission of experience... joy, sorrow, shock, fear, these are the stuff of news....
>
> Its symbolic truth, its power of evocation is enhanced by the supposed reality which the sounds which surround it stimulate.... Film is not reality but illusion, at best an imitation of reality.

Because there is no definitive version of the news, what is reported and the manner in which this is done is entirely

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[10] Smith, p. 74.

[11] cited by Edward Jay Epstein in News From Nowhere: Television and the News (New York: Random House, 1973) on pp. 4,5,18,39.

dependent upon how the different (and competing) news media select and organize the available material. In recent years, a number of critics of television news have written at length on the news process in terms of the "organizational considerations" imposed by the networks on their news divisions. Epstein terms these requirements "procedures, systems, and policies intended to reduce the uncertainties of news to manageable proportions".[12]

He claims that American television's version of the national news is subject to certain predictable restraints based on known costs which include air time and the availability of resources, both personnel and equipment. The economic logic of commercial television reinforces the reporting of the "expected" or routinized event -- one announced sufficiently in advance for a crew and equipment to be dispatched to the scene. What is at work here is the principle of diminishing returns: a fixed budget is allocated for the provision of a specific amount of news programming each week; there are a number of predictably newsworthy events and characters certain to produce a useable story; there is also a quota of filmed reports required to produce a balanced and "entertaining" newscast; and there is neither the time nor the opportunity to engage in the search for original information or investigative reporting.

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[12] Epstein, pp. 259-66.

Commercial broadcasting also bases many of its decisions on the theory of audience flow: the news is presented in such a way as to capture the interest of as many as possible of the potential viewers, and to retain them for the duration of the newscast in the hopes that they will stay tuned to that channel for the programming which follows. It is felt that viewer attention will be prolonged by filmed footage that focuses on activity. Complex issues must thus be rendered in images that are visually precise, preferably reduced to "black and white", with the emphasis on a highly dramatic confrontation between clearly-defined opponents.

> News organizations require a set of internal rules (in order) to co-ordinate the efforts of correspondents, technicians, editors and producers into a news product that meets (their) budgets, standards and schedules. Lippman referred to these "standardized routines" as being absolutely essential to reduce the virtually limitless barrage of information to manageable proportions.[13]

"HOLDING UP A MIRROR TO SOCIETY"

When television presents the news, not only does it select only a very small proportion of what really happened, it tends to give an undue emphasis to those events which it does report by giving the impression that it is exposing actual events in the real world with the viewer invited along as a special observer. For

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[13] Epstein, page 42.

this reason, television has sometimes been termed a "window on the world". Another metaphor that has been used, is that of a mirror reflecting society, for with television the camera frames each image in such a way as to give it immediate impact.

> The mirror analogy also suggests immediacy: happenings are reflected instantaneously, as they occur, as in a mirror.... The notion of a 'mirror of society' implies that whatever happens of significance will be reflected on television news. Network news, however, far from being omniscient, is a very limited news-gathering operation...[14]

Epstein explains at length the camera's role in "the resurrection of reality" (chapter 5). When television provides us with information it is very seldom that we see an event unfolding before the live camera. Instead, we are provided with a filmed reconstruction of a story about the event. This re-organization of reality is required because, more often than not, the natural sequence of events is full of "digressions, confusions and inconsistencies".

> Editing involves selecting certain fragments of a film of a given subject and arranging them in an order which appears to represent a coherent view of the event....(This is done) in order to eliminate all technically inferior film footage and reduce visual noise or disconcerting elements....(and to distill) action from preponderantly inactive scenes.[15]

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[14] Epstein, pp. 14-5.

[15] Epstein, pp. 174-6.

Several critics have termed this process which is, after all, intrinsic to the nature of television as an element of distortion.

> ...news weaves a secondary environment around every one of us who receives it. News tends to lay out the order of 'priorities' among the issues which confront society; it creates some of the doubts and fosters the certainties of that society, placing them all in a context of its own. [16]

The Listener recently published a comment by British MP Christopher Tugendhat, entitled "The distorting mirror of television". In this article he points out the strengths and weaknesses of television as a source of information and ideas.

> Television's supreme strength is obvious. It is vivid and immediate. So much so that it can sometimes create in the viewer's mind the illusion of being present at the events taking place on the screen, or even, in some strange disembodied way, of participating in them.[17]

He comments on the influence of television in turning public opinion in the U.S. against the war in Vietnam and in generating sympathy and concern for its refugees. However, if cameras are not present to record an event, it is almost as if it hasn't happened.

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[16] Smith, page 75.

[17] The Listener, 17 April 1975, p. 493.

> In the modern world, it is almost as if the only reality is that recorded by the television cameras. If they are not there, nothing seems to matter. If they are, our interest is aroused and our consciences engaged. But it leads to a very partial and distorted view of the world.

He then goes on to criticize the simplistic effect that results from television's excessive reliance on visual effects:

> Television's immediacy and vividness are not only its greatest strength, but also the source of its principal weakness. To an outsider, those who produce its programmes seem to devote so much time and effort to the visual impact aspect of their work that they have been unable to develop their analytical talents to anything like the same degree.... they are very good at showing us what is happening, but much less effective at telling us why. And if a subject has little or no visual potential it is far too often overlooked completely.

In a recent edition of Broadcasting,[18] the president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce spoke of the problem of bias in television reporting: what he termed "misimpression", a wrong perception of the facts resulting from only partial information. Others, have accused it of being overly simplistic, of lacking depth or range, and of encouraging a "showdown" approach to problem-solving.

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[18] Arch Booth, Broadcasting, February 10, 1975, p. 26.

Prof. Schiller, a teacher of communications and economics at the University of California, attributes the superficial diversity of the media's content as an intentional manipulation of social reality, a plot by the "mind managers" to package the consciousness of the unwitting consumer of cultural images.[19]

> As presented by the national message-making apparatus, conflict is almost always an individual matter, in its manifestations and in its origin. The social roots of conflict just do not exist for the cultural, informational managers....role identification is divorced from significant social changes.
>
> On a strictly commercial level, the presentation of social issues creates uneasiness in mass audiences, or so audience researchers believe. To be safe, to hold onto as large a public as possible, sponsors are always eager to eliminate potentially "controversial" program material.

Television is also accused of distorting the truth through its use of stereotyped images: thus, a policeman becomes the symbol for authority, and a long-haired student radical, the youth of today. And the camera, focussing on a scene of activity can produce an erroneous interpretation of the real facts of a situation.

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[19] Herbert I. Schiller, The Mind Managers, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), pp. 17,18.

> What is notable about media reporting of violence is the bias, the stress given those things which titillate, which entertain, which pander to the tastes currently fashionable: in other words, on the surface sensations of the single events of theatrical value.... News reporting is still very much action-oriented, ignoring the fact that present-day reality does not organize itself into neat compartments.... Because there is no sense of proportion to news reporting of violence, because of that stress on immediacy presented with a glossy superficiality, the average consumer is almost compelled to indulge in gross over-simplification....[20]

Television officials are understandably sensitive to the recurrent vocal criticisms of violence in news programming. As the Eisenhower Commission on the causes and prevention of violence discovered, broadcast executives consider the elimination of the reporting of violent events to be "suppression of information" and an abridgement of the "freedom of our news department to report the news as we see it".[21] For these men the visualization of violent acts is an essential part of the newsgathering process: violence exists in society and must be reported.

Small reports that violence on newscasts has a strange and remarkable impact, considering the extent of its occurence. Despite the fact that the actual presentation of violent acts on the air is extremely rare, because such images are vivid, they are retained

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[20] Frank Adams, "Our Media of Violence", Content, March 1974.

[21] Small, p. 89.

in the viewers' memory. He also cites [22] figures on the percentage of violent activity broadcast by the three U.S. networks in their coverage of the 1968 Chicago convention: NBC, less than 3%; CBS, also less than 3%; ABC, 1.1%. In fact, in the whole of 1968, of all the material presented by ABC news, only 9% was associated with violence.

THE ENLARGED PERSPECTIVE -- DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMMING

Documentary programming which can combine factual evidence, informed opinion and various dramatic devices, is often presumed to have an editorial function. Information about the real world is given extended treatment by means of actuality coverage, feature interviews, fictional reconstructions of past events, or even postulations of a future "reality".

John Grierson, who was Canada's first Film Commissioner and the creator of the National Film Board of Canada, has spoken of the early history of the documentary.[23] He considers a film by Robert Flaherty, Nanook of the North (1921), to be not only one of the first but also one of the most notable uses of film for

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[22] Small, p. 90.

[23] See, Grierson on Documentary, edited with an introduction by Forsyth Hardy, (London: Collins, 1946); and, Transcript, CRTC Public Hearing (concerning "Air of Death"), March 18-20, 1969, pp. 626-30.

"the creative treatment of actuality". Grierson, having perceived as a student that the motion picture offered enormous possibilities for the dramatization of actual observations and that it could be utilized as a "melder and moulder of opinion and imagination in modern society", convinced first the British and then the Canadian governments to permit him to establish a facility for the production and distribution of documentary films.

Because of the power of film to shape public opinion it has often been accused of deliberately tampering with the facts -- as has, of course, admittedly been done for propaganda purposes during time of war. The film-maker, however, contends that if there is distortion it exists "in favour of the essential truth which he is trying to convey".[24] Furthermore, it is the function of the film editor to make pleasing and appropriate juxtapositions between sound track and picture, an effort of "distortion" essential to the craft.

As information leaves the realm of actuality or straight reporting, in order to treat a subject in depth, it enters the more creative dramatic domain with its allowance for a certain degree of "poetic licence". Nevertheless, the documentarist has a responsibility never to stage-manage the facts in order to create a wrong impression --

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[24] Grierson, Transcript, pp. 631-4. (cf. this reference from a speech by James Russell Wiggins, former editor of the Washington Post, cited by Small, p. 286: "It has been said that the camera does not lie, but the camera does lie. It is a notorious, compulsive, unashamed and mischievous liar".)

the techniques he employs should only be used to reveal what is natural and true, not to bear false witness.[25]

Television journalists who make use of the documentary format in the treatment of controversial issues have expressed a basic commitment to serve the public interest as objectively as possible. The president of the Canadian Television Network (CTV) has outlined [26] the rights and obligations of the broadcaster in programming topics of public concern:

> 1. The broadcaster has the right and the responsibility to examine and report on every aspect of today's society. One of his major purposes must be to stimulate public interest in events and conflicts of everyday life....
>
> 2. The right to report on society has inherent with it a responsibility to use all reasonable care and all available professional skill in the examination and treatment of the subject matter.
>
> 3. The examination must strive for balance and objectivity in its appraisal of the subject matter as it exists, and as it exists within a prepared programme. Employment of human resources implies that judgements as to the degree of objectivity exercised by producers or journalists may not be universally shared.
>
> 4. The right to treat, or the responsibility to treat, any subject within the body politic may include the right to be wrong presuming that all reasonable efforts have been expended to examine all relevant facts which are generally available.

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[25] Grierson, Transcript, p. 643

[26] Murray Chercover, Transcript, CRTC Public Hearing, March 18-20, 1969, pp. 525-6.

5. The broadcaster has the right after all reasonable and zealous examination to deal with any inequity, injustice or impropriety occuring in his society in what might be categorized as an editorial manner in which judgements are made and conclusions are put forward. This right requires, however, that the producer must include in his preparation a recognition of the other side of the question.

The broadcaster's power to influence public opinion is also constrained by a number of factors[27] which act to ensure that he operates within the public interest. These include the training and supervision of program staff at all levels and throughout each aspect of the creative process; the fact that television is a competitive medium, subject to audience ratings, makes the public itself "a conditioning factor in terms of acceptance of the attitudes of a programme"; and the criticims of the daily press.

It is the competitive factor of television that implies doubts about the documentary's ability to provide fair objective treatment of a subject. The question is often raised whether the public must be stimulated in order to respond to the communications media: must the documentary create an impact in order to get people concerned with a particular problem?

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[27] Charles Templeton, Transcript, CRTC Public Hearing, March 18-20, 1969, pp. 556-7.

> 'Talking heads' in public affairs programming is not viable today.... It is not sufficient to have two experts holding different points of view talk at one another, because unless they have dramatic personalities and a conflict arises in which the classic confrontation takes place, which can be dramatic and exciting, the public properly demands more. They want to see visual evidence and visual presentation of the issue in order to justify it. Impact is a valid requirement of useful contributory programming.[28]

THE MANIPULATION OF INFORMATION -- MEDIA BLACKMAIL

In their search for newsworthy material, the information media tend to favour the depiction of events "which disrupt the cohesion of a society (whether they are matters of scandal or of violence) and provide instant interest and audience involvement."[29] And television, having to compete with the other mass media, seeks to focus on the human experience at the centre of each news story. These factors have made television in particular highly susceptible to a phenomenon which is known as media blackmail. Partly, this situation is created by the medium itself, generally unintentionally, as it attempts to structure complex reality into simple and clearly perceptible visual images; partly, it is an entirely deliberate manipulation of the medium by the newsmakers.

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[28] Chercover, Transcript, p. 565.

[29] Smith, p. 105

William Small also talks of the interrelation of television and "the real world". The mere reporting of an event by the medium "imparts a certain respectability, a certain acceptability".[30] The power of television to determine what shall seem important and what shall be neglected [31] from amongst what Walter Lippman has termed the "incredible medley of fact, propaganda, rumour, suspicion, clues, hopes and fears", has made it the target of those seeking to manipulate the medium for purposes of promoting their own interests and ideologies.

There have been numerous examples in the recent past of criminals, political fugitives, kidnappers, assassins, and radical dissenters directing and controlling media attention to their activities, whether by means of press conferences and communiques, or by demanding popular media figures to serve as hostages or mediators in their disputes with authority. Media-aware dissidents consider it part of their strategy to enlist television as an ally, a mechanism for achieving visibility.[32]

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[30] Small, pp. 26-7

[31] Writing about the American newsreel in its heyday, in terms that are totally applicable to the 1970s, Martin Jackson observed that it "gave audiences football games, floods, bathing beauties and celebrities. The movie-goer of the 1930s would learn far more about John Dillinger or Miss America than about the Little Steel Strike or the Spanish Civil War". (From a review of "The American Newsreel 1911-1967", New York Times Book Review, 6 August, 1972, p. 4 cited by Herbert Schiller in The Mind Managers, p. 31.)

[32] Gladys Engel and Kurt Lang, "Some Pertinent Questions on Collective Violence and the News Media" Journal of Social Issues, vol. 28, no. 1 (1972) pp. 96-7.

> ...the media -- just because they exist -- make a difference in political life.... Mass media exposure is a prerequisite for participation in the thought life of society; all evidence shows that high media consumers are both more likely to hold opinions on a variety of matters and to perceive possibilities of which others not so exposed are unlikely to be aware.... In a similar way, the coverage of events promotes awareness of such events, and the fuller the coverage the larger the size of the attentive public.

But it is not only protesters who have recognized the ability of the media to magnify the significance of intrinsically trivial incidents and of minor figures into something eminently newsworthy. Political figures have made use of television to tell their side of a story (particularly through the press conference and the news release), and television journalists have not hesitated on occasion to advocate or denigrate the policies of those in authority.

PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

When broadcasting began it had to share its role of "cultural brokerage"[33] with the record industry, the cinema, the popular performing arts and the newspaper. The initial problem facing the new medium was -- how to address its audience. On the

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[33] Smith, p. 43.

entertainment side, television borrowed heavily from radio, film and the theatre; the information aspect took its cues from the written press and traditions of photo-journalism.

The best assurance of any medium's depiction of reality should be found in the standards established by its professional practitioners; for television newsmen the appropriate standards have traditionally been sought in the journalists' code of ethics. The question remains unanswered as to how workable are such standards for complex electronic journalism.

The professional journalist is a seeker after truth. To quote Lippman again.

> The press... is like the beam of a searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of darkness, into vision.[34]

In 1947, the Commission for a Free and Responsible Press set forth five goals for the press so it could discharge its obligation to provide the information the public has a right to know.

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[34] Small, p. 284.

1. A truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning.

2. A forum for the exchange of comment and criticism.

3. A means of projecting the opinions and attitudes of the groups in the society to one another.

4. A method of presenting and clarifying the goals and values of society.

5. Full access to the day's intelligence.[35]

Although the wording of these prescriptions seems to have been coloured by the circumstances of World War II, the major implication is the necessity of providing precise and factual information.

In the intervening years, the uses and abuses of the written and electronic press have been the subject of lengthy and on-going debates concerning professional responsibility and freedom of expression.

> Many news editors and their staffs seem willing to rethink and redefine their procedures for reporting disorders; but they always jealously safeguard their rights, citing the freedom of the press, the right of the public to know and make its own decisions, and the responsibility of the 'fourth estate' to report fully, fairly, and responsibly without prior restraint by any public authority. To paraphrase one newspaper editor: any code established by the media itself is a policy; any code imposed from the outside is censorship.[36]

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[35] cited on page 36, Baker and Ball, (cf. Code of Broadcast News Ethics, RTNDA, attached to this paper as an appendix, pp.27-9).

[36] Baker and Ball, pp. 217-18.

The guidelines imposed by the profession generally place great emphasis on traditional good reporting practices[37] such as, verification of information; balanced presentation that conforms to the facts; moderation in reporting crime and violence; avoidance of sensationalism; and respect for privacy -- in other words, accuracy, restraint, and strict attribution.

To go beyond these criteria, however, is to enter the debate on freedom of expression. Perhaps, as has been said, propaganda is whatever you don't agree with and, therefore, something to be suppressed. The Hutchins Commission,[38] in the appendix to its Report on Freedom of the Press speaks of "limits to the legal toleration of abuse of the liberty of expression" and of the fact that while the press must be accountable to the community it serves, the overall social responsibility for the quality of press service rests with the public.

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[37] from a report in the March 4, 1974 edition of Le Devoir (p. 5) concerning a UNESCO initiative to establish a universal code of ethics for the press.

[38] A Free and Responsible Press, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1947), pp. 107-33.

A free press is not a passing goal of human society; it is a necessary goal. For the press, taken in sum, is the swift self-expression of the experience of each moment of history; and this expression ought to be true. Much of the content of the press is intended solely for its own day; and the journalist sometimes reflects that his art is one of improvisation, and that its products, being destined to pass with the interest of the moment, require no great care in their workmanship. Yet, just because it is the day's report of itself, it is the permanent word of that day to all other days. The press must be free because its freedom is a condition of its veracity, and its veracity is its good faith with the total record of the human spirit.

At the same time, freedom of the press is certainly not an isolated value, nor can it mean the same in every society and at all times. It is a function within a society and must vary with the social context. It will be different in times of general security and in times of crisis; it will be different under varying states of public emotion and belief.... The press itself is always one of the chief agents in destroying or in building the bases of its own significance.

APPENDIX

CODE OF BROADCAST NEWS ETHICS
RADIO TELEVISION NEWS DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

The following code of broadcast news ethics was adopted September 26, 1970:

> Recognizing the importance to a Democracy of an informed public, the members of the Radio Television News Directors Association of Canada believe that the broadcasting of factual, objective, and timely news is the finest public service radio or television stations can perform.
>
> To that end, they declare their acceptance of the standards of practice here set forth, and their solemn intent to honour them to the limits of their ability.

ARTICLE ONE

The primary purpose of broadcast newsmen is to inform the public of events of improtance and appropriate interest in a manner that is accurate and comprehensive.

ARTICLE TWO

Broadcast news presentations shall be designed not only to offer timely and accurate information, but also to present it in the light of relevant circumstances that give it meaning and perspective.

> This standard means that news reports, when clarity demands it, will be laid against pertinent factual background; that factors such as race, creed, nationality or prior status will be reported only when they are relevant; that comment or subjective content will be properly identified; and that errors in fact will be promptly acknowledged and corrected.

ARTICLE THREE

Broadcast newsmen shall seek to select material for newscast solely on their evaluation of its merits as news.

> This standard means that news will be selected on the criteria of significance. It excludes sensationalism or misleading emphasis in any efforts to influence news selection and presentation, whether from within the broadcasting industry or from without.

ARTICLE FOUR

Broadcast newsmen shall at all times display humane respect for the dignity, privacy and the well being of persons with whom the news deals.

ARTICLE FIVE

Broadcast newsmen shall govern their personal lives and such non-professional associations as may impinge on their professional activities in a manner that will protect them from conflict of interest, real or apparent.

ARTICLE SIX

Broadcast newsmen shall seek actively to present all news the knowledge of which will serve the public interest. They shall make constant effort to open doors closed to the reporting of public proceedings with tools appropriate to broadcasting, consistent with the public interest. They acknowledge the newsman's ethic of protection of confidential information and sources, unless this would clearly and unmistakably defy the public interest.

ARTICLE SEVEN

News directors recognize the responsibility borne by broadcasting to present informed analysis and comment or editorial opinion on public events and issues. They accept the responsibility for the presentation of such matters by individuals whose experience and judgement qualify them for it.

ARTICLE EIGHT

Broadcast newsmen shall conduct themselves with dignity. They shall keep broadcast equipment as unobtrusive and silent as possible. Where facilities are inadequate, pool broadcasts should be arranged. Broadcast newsmen should attempt to prevent their presence and that of their equipment from distorting the character of importance of events -- e.g. demonstrations, civil disorders, etc.

ARTICLE NINE

In reporting matters that are or may be litigated, the newsman shall avoid practices which would tend to interfere with the right of an individual to a fair trial.

ARTICLE TEN

This association shall actively censure and seek to prevent violations of these standards, and members shall actively encourage their observance by all newsmen whether of the Radio Television News Directors Association or not.

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Symposium on Television Violence
Colloque sur la violence à la télévision

VIOLENT MOTION PICTURES; CRIME RADIO PROGRAMS, AND CRIME COMIC BOOKS - THREE CONTROVERSIES IN THE SCHOLARLY AND POPULAR PRESS 1909-1953*

*one of a series of papers prepared by the following researchers:

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Views expressed in these papers do not necessarily reflect those of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission

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The current controversy over the behavioural effects of television has some general parallels with previous controversies centering around motion pictures, radio, and comic books. The contours of each such controversy were different from each other, and different from the current one, but some general themes are recognizable. These controversies took place in both the scholarly and popular press, and at points in between, and the sources cited here reflect that fact, being drawn from publications as disparate as the American Journal of Sociology and Better Homes and Gardens.

Public anxieties about the possible undesirable effects of motion pictures were the first to be expressed, almost as soon as the medium appeared. Concern about the relationship of motion pictures to delinquency was expressed as early as 1909 by Jane Addams. (Addams, 1909) And in 1921, Dr. A. T. Poffenberger wrote about the motion picture in The Scientific Monthly:

> As an agent of publicity, with its immense daily audience of young people, it has great possibilities for creating and developing in them a spirit of true Americanism, a respect for law and social order which are recognized as essentials for a democracy. Rightly used, the motion picture is indeed one of the most powerful educational forces of the twentieth century....But wrongly used and not carefully guarded, it might easily become a training school for

> anti-Americanism, immorality and disregard for law - a condition in which each individual is a law unto himself. (Poffenberger, 1921)

The controversy reached a climactic point in 1933 with the publication of a series of studies, "Motion Pictures and Youth", supported by the Payne Fund and usually known as the "Payne Fund Studies". The Payne Fund Studies, twelve in number, examined systematically several facets of the question, using a variety of sophisticated methodologies, including in-depth interviews, analysis of questionnaire responses, content analysis of motion pictures, and even galvanic responses techniques. The summary volume, Motion Pictures and Youth, gave three conclusions:

> (1) ...the motion picture, as such, is a potent medium of education. Children even of the early age of 8 see half the facts in a picture and remember them for a surprisingly long time.... Emotions are measurably stirred as the scenes of a drama unfold and this excitement may be recorded in deviations from the norm in sleep patterns, by visible gross evidences of bodily movement and by refined internal responses. The evidence of their influence is massive and irrefutable.
>
> (2) ...for children the content of current pictures is not good. There is too much sex and crime and love for a balanced diet for children. These impartial studies reveal much more harm than help.
>
> (3) "...the motion picture situation is very complicated. It is one among many influences which mold the experience of children. How powerful this is in relation to the influence of the ideals taught in the home, in the school, and in the

> church, by street life and companions or by community customs, these studies have not canvassed." (Charters, 1933)

The Payne Fund Studies received considerable attention and their findings were popularized by Henry James Forman in a book, Our Movie Made Children. The scholarly community received the Payne Studies with general acclaim, at least partly because of their methodological innovations. Reviewing the Payne Fund Studies for the American Journal of Sociology, the University of Wisconsin's Kimball Young drew a contrast between the Payne Fund's "carefully constructed studies and their cautious interpretations", with Forman's popularization:

> ...the contrast of his discussion with that in the original monographs at many critical points is so great and the apparent public acceptance of his book as an authoritative review of the original findings is so evident that we have here a good case of the psychology of myth-making itself. His volume is in fact a form of propaganda evidently stimulated by those supporters of the original research project who felt that the motion pictures constitute a serious menace to public and private morals. (Young, 1935)

Other popularizations of the Payne Fund Studies were published in the concerned press. James Rorty asserted in Parents Magazine:

> The Payne Fund investigators are, with certain qualifications, definitely affirmative with respect to these questions: the movies do help to make criminals and sexual delinquents.
>
> The Payne Fund investigation is a fact-finding study. The psychologists, sociologists, and educators who carried it on are cautious in interpreting and in drawing conclusions from the evidence, and make no specific recommendations. Nevertheless, the facts which they set forth constitute a rather formidable indictment of the industry. (Rorty, 1933)

But the Payne Fund studies did not go unchallenged. In 1937 the philosopher Mortimer Adler published a massive attack on the studies and linked them to an age-old controversy over the place of the popular arts in the "moral instruction" of the young. Additionally, he attacked the philosophical underpinnings of the studies' methods:

> ...investigations of the Payne Fund variety are probably the worst example of the kind of work that is done today in psychology and the social sciences, but they are a true example nevertheless. The existence of such research in our universities... calls upon anyone who has the impulse to reform things for man's greater good to direct such efforts to the improvement of universities as much as, if not more so than, to the regulation of the arts. (Adler, 1937)

In 1938, Raymond Moley, believing that Adler's book was "somewhat inaccessible to the public" undertook "at the suggestion of representatives of the motion picture industry" to summarize and popularize Adler's work (much as Forman had

summarized and popularized the Payne Fund Studies). To the philosophical attack, he added his own comments about the motives of the Payne Fund investigators:

> Obviously, truly scientific knowledge is better than mere personal opinion, or even than opinion widely shared. Obviously, it would be better if the influence of the movies, or any other art, could be established beyond reasonable doubt by scientific evidence. But can it be done?...When the reformer ...operates in the guise of a scientist, his findings are likely to be worse than worthless because factual and moral questions will be confused....our present ignorance is so great with respect to the human mind and the relationships of human beings to each other, that the use of such crude methods as we now have justifies only the most cautious and tentative conclusions. About the causes of human conduct, science is now equipped only to surmise: it cannot know... so often sociologists are sounding off on delicate matters of great public importance. Many of them have intruded their opinions, thinly veiled as scientific judgments into every phase of our life - economics, politics, ethics, and education. (Moley, 1938)

No massive public studies acted as a landmark for concern about the effects of radio violence. However, in 1935, Sidonie Gruenberg, in a thoughtful paper in The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, cited "rather informal studies" by parent groups:

> We now know that a very large proportion of children between the ages of six and thirteen devote an imposing total of hours to the radio. There is evidence of a sustained interest from the age of six on, rising to a peak at about ten to twelve years.

> In samples checked up, forty children out of a hundred listen in for half an hour or more each day, following certain programs with passionate interest ....Children preponderantly show enthusiasm for a kind of program which parents as a whole view unfavourably with about the same unanimity. The thriller, the mystery, comedy, the melodramatic adventure series - all these are seized on by the children with an avidity that leaves the parents aghast. (Gruenberg, 1938)

The popular press tended, in the absence of firm scientific studies, to offer more anecdotal evidence about the effects of radio violence. In a series in Scribner's Magazine in 1933-34, one writer described his own experiences in weaning his children away from radio violence:

> Within my own household a little more than a year ago there was a condition that could not be remedied by either prayer or medicine...At the time, my daughter, then eight years old, was trying to sleep comfortably with her head under the bed covering. This strategy was designed to defeat the ogres, knife-biting pirate and other vipers who seemed to lurk in the dark corners of her chamber....My son, who was six, had no nocturnal difficulties...But the various movements of his play during the day had an occasional Dillinger flavour, not to mention spasmodic use of an ill-chosen expletive. The cause of it was traced to our radio set, from which came an almost unbelievable quantity of sensational dramatic hokum, sent regularly from the broadcasting studios by purveyors of goods, chiefly dining notions. The programs were intended to attract, inveigle and actually frighten child listeners into buying the merchandise advertised....The job of destroying the radio influence wasn't easy, but we won the battle. We succeeded by dissecting the objectionable programs and showing them for what they were....In the short space of a year developments are interesting. The boy has abandoned gun play and criminal phraseology...

> My daughter is wholly immune to the influence of radio programs. (Mann, 1934)

And in 1938, another writer complained in The American Mercury.

> Come five o'clock every weekday afternoon, millions of American children drop whatever they are doing and rush to the nearest radio set. Here, with feverish eyes and cocked ears, they listen for that first earsplitting sound which indicates that the Children's Hour is at hand. This introductory signal may be the wail of a police siren, the rattle of a machine-gun, the explosion of a hand grenade, the shriek of a dying woman, the bark of a gangster's pistol, or the groan of a soul in purgatory. Whatever it is, the implication is the same: Radio has resumed its daily task of cultivating our children's morals - with blood and thunder effects. The horrendous programs which clutter the ether from 5 to 6 p.m. cover a wide range of topics, but the theme of most is similar. Emphasis is placed on gore and violence; the other ingredients necessary to dramatic continuity are presented merely as camouflage....Today's radio gives virtually no respite. Every day, come 5 o'clock, the same bloodcurdling broadcasts gurgle through the loudspeaker....Our radio-conscious children want blood and gore - they've been reared on it....And the sponsors are determined that as long as hack continuity writers and ham actors can grind out drama....just so long will they work the horror program racket. (Gibson, 1938)

Another author, also writing in 1938, zeroed in on a more specific group, what she called "underprivileged youth".

> Every night in the homes of our land almost irrespective of economic level, youth listens to the radio. From restaurants, filling stations, automobile dashboards, and from eating places and hideouts of a shadier variety, the radio reaches

> the ears of underprivileged youth. And most of them prefer programs that deal with the adventures, escape and capture of criminals. (Thompson, 1938)

The emergence of the comic book as a separate entertainment medium for juveniles was associated with another controversy over effects on behaviour. At first the concern was unfocussed. One writer in the Christian Century in 1942 had political objections and argued that all comics were a bad influence because:

> Although the superheroes are supposed to be dedicated to the service of freedom and democracy, their virtues and methods are purely fascist in nature. (Frakes, 1942)

But concern soon moved around to a claimed association of comic book reading with delinquent behaviour. Some serious scholarly work was conducted; one team of researchers concluded, on the basis of the analysis of the reading habits of delinquent and non-delinquent groups, that

> the delinquent and non-delinquent groups....read about the same number of "harmless" comic books, but the delinquents read many more "questionable" and "harmful" comics than do the non-delinquents.... Although we are certainly not justified in implying that there is a causal relationship involved, there is undoubtedly some connection that merits further careful investigation. (Hoult, 1949)

But the burden of the attack on violent comic books was carried by one man, Fredric C. Wertham, senior psychiatrist for the New York City Department of Hospitals. He and his research team spent seven years analyzing the role played by comic books in the lives of delinquent children. The results of their studies were published in a number of articles, (Wertham, 1948) and in the authoritative 1953 book, Seduction of the Innocent. The latter is a difficult book to summarize, because of its somewhat unsystematic presentation, and heavy reliance on case studies as the method of analysis. It is, for example, never very clear whether the research indicated that all comic books were harmful, or whether only certain types were. One case, a "delinquent girl of fourteen":

> For years her reading had consisted of comic books. There was no question but that this girl lived under difficult social circumstances. But she was prevented from rising above them by the specific corruption of her character development by comic-book seduction...By reading many comic books the decent but tempted child has the moral props taken from under him. The antisocial suggestions from comic books reach children in their leisure time, when they are alone, when their defenses are down. (Wertham, 1953)

Another case involved a fifteen year old boy who had shot and killed another boy.

> After a full study of the psychological and social background, we came to the conclusion that the fact that he was an inveterate reader of comic books was an important contributing factor. His favorite comic book, read over and over, contained no less than eighty-one violent acts, including nineteen murders. (Wertham, 1953)

The case studies are linked, in a general way, with broader statements:

> Children's play in the streets is now of a wildness that it did not have formerly. Children, often with comic books sticking out of their pockets, play massacre, hanging, lynching, torture. The influence of comic books...is discernible in the nature of these games. (Wertham, 1953)

Although the major thrust of Wertham's work is against comic books which depict crime and violence, he frequently attacks what he regards as other undesirable features of comic books:

> (Wonder Woman)...is always a horror type. She is physically very powerful, tortures men, has her own female following, is the cruel "phallic" woman. While she is a frightening figure for boys, she is an undesirable ideal for girls, being the exact opposite of what girls are supposed to want to be. (Wertham, 1953)

And he deplores the failure of comic books to depict scenes from ordinary family life:

> In vain does one look in comic books for scenes of

> constructive work or of ordinary home life. I have never seen in any of the crime, superman, adventure, space, horror, etc. comic books a normal family sitting down at a meal. I have seen an elaborate charming breakfast scene, but it was between Batman and his boy...And I have seen a parallel scene when Wonder Woman had breakfast with an admiring young girl...(Wertham, 1953)

At other times, Wertham seems to argue against the whole complex of media influences on children, not just comic books. His brief remarks on television are perhaps instructive in this regard:

> The public has judged television much more harshly than it has comic books...The greatest obstacle to the future of good television for children is comic books, and the comic book culture in which we force children to live. If you want television to give uncorrupted programs to children you must first be able to offer it audiences of uncorrupted children.

Although each of these three controversies about media effects had its own shape, a number of common themes appear in all. The first, and most obvious, theme is that each successive controversy primarily focussed on the effects of media on <u>children</u>.

> ...an inquiry into the accusations that have been made against the motion picture seems justified at this time when attention is being centred on the means of crime prevention. The question is a psychological one, and concerns the effects of motion picture experience upon the mind of the young

> person. The average adult cannot interpret the reactions of a child in terms of his own reactions because there are fundamental differences between the two. A knowledge of child psychology is needed to understand what the motion picture means to the child. (Poffenberger, 1921)

> Theoretically, an adult is a free agent, but children need protection. (Charters, 1933)

> ...in some respects the radio finds the parents more helpless than the "movies" or the "funnies"; for no locks will keep this intruder out, nor can parents shut their children away from it. (Gruenberg, 1935)

Moreover, the media in question are seen to be affecting children in the absence of adult supervision.

> Motion pictures are not understood by the present generation of adults. They are new; they make an enormous appeal to children; and they present ideas and situations which parents may not like. Consequently, when parents think of the welfare of their children who are exposed to these compelling situations, they wonder about the effect of the pictures upon the ideals and the behavior of the children. (Charters, 1933)

> In this year 1945, it is not unlikely that your youngster, if he's between 6 and 12, spends his Saturday afternoons at the neighbourhood movie, watching a rousing program of westerns and a crime or spy serial; is glued to the radio in the afternoon from 4 to 6; and in the evening until driven to bed; and the rest of his leisure time has his nose in a comic book. (Shultz, 1945)

> The average parent has no idea that every imaginable crime is described in detail in comic books...The comics industry took hold of the minds of children unobserved. (Wertham, 1953)

Allied with this concept is the theme of discovery. One writer described her own discovery of children's adventure radio programs:

> As I came in weary from work, I snapped on the radio and tried to relax on the davenport to the accompaniment of a bit of music before dinner...But suddenly I straightened and reached for the dials. What emerged from my favourite station was far removed from the restful rhythms I was seeking. An airplane zoomed. Men shouted in strained, unnatural voices, maneuvring to escape threatening death...You know, of course, what happened. I had tuned in on the children's hour. (Saltzman, 1938)

In brief, each of the three controversies expresses, in addition to general concerns about the long-run and short-run societal consequences of antisocial behaviour promoted by the medium in question, a more specific anxiety about parental and adult supervision of children. This undercurrent seems to reflect an anxiety that the impersonal mass media represent an alien force which interferes in the socialization process and intrudes itself between the parent and child. Wertham expresses this idea in the anecdote which he uses to end his book on crime comics.

> One evening at the Lafargue Clinic a young woman came to see me. She was the mother of a boy who after some delinquency had been referred to the Clinic and been treated there. She told me that the boy had got into trouble again, this time picked up with a switchblade knife. He was now in a youth shelter and she had been

told he would be sent to a reformatory...So I consoled her again and told her we would do whatever we could. Then I added, "I know what you have done for this boy. Don't think that it's your fault." At that she looked up, all alert. "It must be my fault," she said. "I heard that in the lectures. And the judge said it, too. It's the parents' fault that the children do something wrong. Maybe when he was very young...." "Not at all," I interrupted her. "You have done all that you could. I have the whole chart here and we know it from the boy himself. You are a good mother, and you've given this boy a good home. But the influence of a good home is frustrated if it is not supported by the other influences children are exposed to -- comic books, the crime programs and all that. Adult influences work against them. We have studied that, and we know good parents when we see them. So don't worry about yourself. It's not your fault." She seemed to come out from under a cloud. She thanked me and got up to go. When she was halfway through the doorway she turned slowly. "Doctor," she said in a low voice. "I'm sorry to take your time. But please--tell me again." I looked at her questioningly. "Tell me again," she said slowly and hesitantly. "Tell me again that it isn't my fault." And I did.

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SECTION TWO: THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF TELEVISION VIOLENCE

This section of the Symposium explored the evidence in the behavioural sciences relating to the possible effects of televised violence on society and patterns of individual behaviour.

Dr. Robert Liebert discussed the experimental and research findings on the learning of anti-social behaviour from television. Panelists with research backgrounds in psychology and sociology discussed "What is learned and what could be learned from TV?"

The Effects of Television Violence: Experimental and Research Findings

Dr. Robert M. Liebert, a professor of psychology and psychiatry at the State University of New York, has long been interested in how television and movies can influence children. His research interests are reflected in approximately eighty published articles and seven books. Dr. Liebert served as principal researcher for the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on television. His most recent book is Early Window - Effects of Television on Children and Youth.

I think I can best serve our common goal by trying to explain, from my point of view, what has passed in the way of research and give you what are confessedly personal reflections as to where we might go. It's perhaps best and fairest if I begin with some disclaimers. My interest is almost exclusively with the effects of entertainment television on

children. The remarks that I offer you may or may not be applicable to adults. Despite those qualifications, I shall try to go beyond the simple issue of TV violence and its possible effects on youth and draw you into a wider context of how these potential influences might actually work, and offer you some suggestions as to my view of what kinds of reactions we might have as a society. We have heard a good deal about history. It has been noted, when the first comic books, films, and radio programmes came out, they were criticized as potentially bringing about increased aggression and anti-social behaviour. But society didn't collapse, despite all the warnings about the comic books and the movies and that raises the question--isn't it the same with television?

I think that really it isn't, entirely. I reckon that the most avid of movie-going children in the 1930's didn't get one-tenth the dose of entertainment from the cinema that our children now get from television. Additionally, the makers of films have the requirements certainly of attracting an audience in some basic sense, drawing children and youth and adults to the box office, but not the requirement of capturing their eyes and ears and wholehearted attention exclusively for the entirety of their programmes. For entertainment television, that must be the goal of the commercial producer and the commercial broadcaster. Money is at stake, and if the child's interest flags, the child will turn the knob and somebody will lose money. The introduction of television changes the way of life of societies more drastically than

any other social innovation we have ever seen. People change their eating habits, change their sleeping habits, youth directs its attention away from written materials and towards television. Television is an extremely unusual medium, I think, in terms of the amount of time that it enjoys, an unusual medium in terms of its special attractiveness.

There is another reason, I think, to be concerned about television, particularly about the possible influence of violence on television. Again, tracing the history of the United States, back in 1954, content analysis of the frequency of aggression on television--and here I refer to overt acts of physical violence where one character hits, stabs, shoots or otherwise does overt physical harm to another--suggested that 17% of all of our prime time programmes were saturated with that kind of aggression. By 1960, it was up to about 60%. By 1969, it had crossed the 80% mark and in our own studies of children's programmes in the 1974/75 season, we found that 83% of all the programmes were dense with violence: a violent act once in every three minutes on children's Saturday morning cartoons. We must ask what effect television violence has and we must be very mindful of the methodological problems, the scientific errors that were made by our predecessors as they asked about the movies, and as they asked about radio and about comic books.

The tests of the effects of the television material have been tests that get rather directly at a child's willingness to aggress against other people overtly, and in physical ways, as a result of merely seeing entertainment television. Almost without exception, they show

that for four year olds, and eight year olds, and for twelve year olds the immediate effect viewing that kind of aggressive material is to increase a child's willingness to physically hurt another individual. That evidence, however, is not by itself sufficient for one may object that children coming into a laboratory to watch television, obviously being tested or having games played with them in some way shortly after the televised experience, is at most suggestive, and isn't hard evidence. For that reason, one of the major thrusts of the Surgeon General's work was to engage in so-called correlational field studies. These investigators said, let us get two kinds of information about a very large number of boys and girls. (1) How much television violence do they naturally watch at home? What is their normal selected diet of television violence? (2) How aggressive is that youngster in terms of his or her own attitudes or behaviour in the real life situation, as measured by the observations of teachers, of peers, of social scientists who are introduced into the ongoing school situation? Again, fairly literally without exception, these correlational studies gave us the same kind of answer as the experiments that had led to them gave. Regardless of whether the youngsters were male or female, white or black, lived in Texas or in New York, the more aggression and violence they were naturally watching in the course of their daily lives at home, the more aggressive they were in their own attitudes and behaviour. Even that's not sufficient evidence. Even when we tie it with the laboratory experiments it is not sufficient, for it is always possible that there is some third factor that explains away the

relationship. You can subtract out the effect of these potential third factors, listing them one at a time. If we subtract out the potential effect of those factors, is there anything left? Simply, there is something left.

In major studies involving hundreds of normal children from all parts of the country, the result remained after this statistical adjustment procedure. The more television violence the child watched, the more aggressive he or she was in his attitudes and behaviour. We are concerned with what our children will be as adults - not merely what they are as children. We had one investigation which I think speaks very directly to that issue. The investigation was conducted by Munro Lethkowitz and his associates. Their principal result was for boys, and it was this:

The single best predictor of how aggressive the child was at age nineteen was how much TV violence he had watched ten years before at age nine, and presumably during the course of his formative development.

The package of evidence that you get by picking up basic laboratory experiments that have a history that runs back twelve or fifteen years, together with the so-called correlational field studies, together with the longitudinal data collected by Lethkowitz, together with the naturalistic experiments of the kind that Stoyer and her associates

produced, seem to me in concert to produce an answer to our question as strong, as clear, as unambiguous and as important as anything else that social scientists have ever done and evidence as firm as natural scientists can ever find. There is a link between watching entertainment television and violent and overt aggressive behaviour by children in real life. What percentage of children are affected? It is in fact difficult to say. It is not a tiny, tiny minority, otherwise the results wouldn't be as strong as they were. Furthermore, if television violence influences some children directly, any child could be the unwitting or indirect victim.

What kind of process is involved in producing these effects? How does it work? Just to point one's finger at television or television violence and say that it is related to overt behaviour is not very satisfying and ultimately will give us few guidelines for action. Instead, I think we have to reflect, in some very broad, sweeping ways. Perhaps as broad-sweeping as: what is our species like, what is man about? Now, in many species most of what is transmitted from generation to generation is genetic. Many animals behave as they do because it is wired into them. Man's most salient characteristic is that he is adaptive. We do not principally transmit social behaviour genetically from one generation to another. Rather, we transmit information socially from one generation to another. We teach our children how to act.

The most effective way to transmit social behaviour to the next generation is in our own actions. We teach our children merely by acting in front of them. They learn observationally. They see what our explicit and implicit values are and by and large they adopt them. I think that's how television works.

The lesson that we are teaching our children through television is that to be violent, to be aggressive, is bad if you are a bad guy, and okay if you are a good guy.

I urge you to note this. Certain kinds of entertainment television have what I judge to be an adverse effect on children; have an effect of making them more aggressive in their day-to-day actions. If this notion of observational learning is right, then other kinds of entertainment television would teach very different kinds of lessons and have very different kinds of effects. It has seemed to us that the first thing that one does is ask the question: Could you meet the usual demands of producer and broadcaster in terms of developing programming that appeals to and entertains children, that captures their interest and is competitive, and at the same time, that not only not teaches lessons of violence and aggression, but teaches the lesson that sometimes interpersonal conflicts can be settled in a non-violent, non-aggressive cooperative way?

Purposely or inadvertently, whether we wish it or not, television is and must be a teacher. Not because we've made it so, but because the natural process of observational learning inheres in children watching the behaviour of others. It is a teacher whose curriculum is largely unplanned, whose effects are largely unmonitored. I really don't know the degree to which the suggestion that we try to alter the kind of television our kids see now by developing more pro-social programmes is realistic. But I am quite sure that most of the other alternatives are unsatisfactory. Letting television violence continue as it has seems to me the least satisfactory of all solutions. You might as well have a try at making television better because the weakest statement you can make is, we run a very serious risk if we do not try.

What is Learned and What could be Learned from Television?

James J. Teevan, Jr., has been an Assistant Professor at the University of Western Ontario, since coming to Canada in 1971. A graduate of Harpur College and Indiana University, Dr. Teevan taught sociology at both Indiana and the University of Maryland. He is the author of numerous publications, papers and reviews concerned with deterrent effects of publishment, deviant behavior and television violence. His current research is concerned with the prestige of sociology journals, television violence and attitudes, and subjective deterrence.

Can the question of the effects of TV violence be answered? Are we asking the right questions? No one can demonstrate to everyone's satisfaction either a connection or a lack of connection between television violence and aggressive behaviour. Still there are pressures for the issue to be decided. Thus social science attempts to provide tentative answers.

Because they are better at demonstrating cause and effect and for controlling the effects of third or confounding variables, laboratory studies are often preferred over survey research. It is in such studies that we have found the strongest links between television violence and aggressive behaviour. However, laboratory studies are criticized for their artificiality, their emphasis on short-term effects, the weakness

of their variables. In few studies are the subjects allowed to inflict violence on real people in an unrestricted environment. In real life, children are not placed alone in a room with a toy exactly like the one they saw abused moments before. Because of these methodological shortcomings, the findings of laboratory studies can be disputed.

Survey research, on the other hand, is more "real life", more long-term, but cause and effect are lost and confounding third variables weaken relationships. Correlations are calculated but one does not know if TV violence causes aggression, or aggressive people choose violent TV, or if a lack of a father figure, for example, causes both a choice of violent TV and aggression.

Taken together, the methodological strengths of survey research should cancel out the weaknesses of laboratory studies and vice versa. Since both types of research show a small positive relationship between TV violence and aggressive behaviour, the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee cautiously accepted that interpretation.

Thus, the two sets (laboratory and survey research) of findings converge in three respects: a preliminary and tentative indication of a causal relation between viewing violence on television and aggressive behaviour; an indication that any such causal relation operates only on some children (who are predisposed to be aggressive); and an indication that it operates only in some environmental contexts.

It is interesting to compare that statement with a 1961 statement by Schramm, Lyle, and Parker:

For some children, under some conditions, some television is harmful. For other children under the same conditions, or for the same children under other conditions, it may be beneficial. For most children, under most conditions, most television is probably neither harmful nor particularly beneficial.

After one million dollars, have we made so much progress? Perhaps we should move the areas of concern away from the effects on behaviour to the effects of television violence on attitudes. These effects may be just as dangerous and even more pervasive than violent behaviour. Specifically, we should look more closely at the effects of television violence on the approval of violence in others, the acceptance of police brutality, corporal punishment in schools, invasion of foreign countries, capital punishment, or the feeling that violence is pervasive and thus one needs to protect oneself and be wary of others.

Maybe we have too much data already; perhaps action is now called for. If we suspect that a chemical may be carcinogenic but are not sure, we will attempt to protect society from its potential effects through warnings, as on cigarettes, or in bans, such as cyclamates. Should not television violence be treated similarly?

Maybe we should move away from the question of proof, itself unanswerable, to the question of values. Should television be censored? This is a political question, one that social science usually refuses to answer, perhaps because it cannot answer. Perhaps television violence should be placed with other issues such as marijuana. The LeDain Commission says it's not that harmful, yet we somehow have not legalized

it. Then there is capital punishment - I can show you data that the murder rate has increased since 1968 when we outlawed capital punishment, but again, the question is a political question. It would be interesting to see whether the people who advocate the censorship of television would also be against the reimposition of capital punishment. I have a feeling they are.

Social science has provided all that it possibly can on the effects of televised violence. We can refine some of our techniques, we can add some more data. We can spend a lot more money, ask more questions, but eventually it has to become a political question.

I did one of the reports for the Surgeon General's Report. As one reads the final research, significant relationships between exposure to TV violence and aggression are reported. This significance, however, refers to statistical significance, not to be confused with either theoretical or practical significance. My study showed correlations of .15, statistically significant (meaning we could generalize to the non-sampled population) but these figures mean that TV violence can explain only two and one-quarter percent of the variance in aggressive behaviour. Other factors explain or account for 97 3/4 percent of variance! Even the Lefkowitz et al correlation of .31 explains less than ten per cent of variance in aggressive bahaviour.

Moreover, the studies cannot rule out third variables as causing both choice of violent television and aggressive behaviour. For example, in the Lefkowitz et al study with its time-lagged correlation, they argue that television watching in Grade three "causes" aggression in Grade 13.

Is it not possible that being from a broken home causes boys to be aggressive and to watch violent TV in Grade three and that other boys protected by their parents do not engage in such behaviour? By Grade 13, however, all boys watch violent TV, parents are irrelevant, but only the boys from broken homes are aggressive. Hence the relationship between TV violence and behaviour would disappear in Grade 13.

Is TV thus a scapegoat? It is easier to control and regulate than other variables: e.g. poverty, discrimination, broken homes, police labelling, schools which encourage competition. Attempts to decrease violence receive great publicity and it appears that governments are hard to work to alleviate violence. It would almost be worthwhile to allow total censorship of television for five years to demonstrate that violence would continue at probably ever-increasing levels. To sum up, we must guard against facile solutions to complex problems.

Marvin Goldberg completed his doctorate in marketing at the University of Illinois. An associate professor at McGill University's Faculty of Management Sciences, Dr. Goldberg is currently conducting research into the effects of pro-social programming on children. Dr. Goldberg is particularly interested in consumer psychology and his work has appeared in several publications, including the Journal of Consumer Research.

It was pointed out earlier that, despite the influence of various mass media, our society hasn't collapsed in total ruin. However, insofar as my remarks lead to the notion of pro-social television, there's clearly a hugh gap between what the society might now be and what it is. The huge array of psychological and psychiatric problems that face our society certainly cannot be linked directly to what TV is or is not. But the alternative hypothesis has never been tested. What would our society be if positive values had been enunciated more in the past? Violence, as good as it might be, and some have argued that it might be good, simply predominates so much of the time that

we have. It's not a question to me of what it means or how good or bad it is. There are just too many other values that we would like to give to our children and we're simply not doing it. Cooperation, sympathy, sharing, affection, friendship, understanding, persistence and competence in tasks, learning to accept rules, control of aggression, coping with frustration, fear reduction, self-esteem, valuing the unique qualities of each individual--where are these shown?

Children are incredibly malleable, very easily influenced. We have it in our power to do good or evil to them. It takes a great deal of effort to change an adult's attitudes. They are based on a whole belief structure. It was pointed out this morning that Archie Bunker and the program "All in the Family" may not be performing the function it set out to do. Everyone enjoys the program but those viewers who are less tolerant, remain less tolerant. They see poor Archie as the fall guy--everyone's picking on him. Those who start off being more tolerant, remain more tolerant. It's awfully hard to change adults, but By God, with children we can do a terrific job. We could, but I don't think we do.

A series of studies have indicated that by the ages of three to five, children have already picked up notions of society's preferences. For a long time, both white and black children in the United States indicated a preference for white dolls. Somehow they had picked up the notion that their parents, or the society around their parents, opted for the white kid. It was a nicer colour, it was more fun to play with. A

couple of recent studies have indicated that whites pick whites, and maybe blacks pick blacks, but essentially, by three to five years of age, children somehow have already absorbed some of their parents attitudes. Now, fortunately, at that age it's not a very well formulated preference in the sense that there's no strong belief structure. It's not very difficult to change that.

Professor Gorn and I conducted a study where we in fact demonstrate that white children, given a choice of playing with a set of non-whites or whites, very readily opt for the white children. The children we tested were white English-Canadians. We introduced them to two sets of kids, one exclusively white, the other containing some non-whites, and asked them which group they would like to play with. Seventy percent of them picked the white kids. This is at age three to five. We then took the two-minute inserts that CBC has been producing to include in its fifteen-minute portion of 'Sesame Street' and showed them to some of these children. These inserts were very low key: Japanese-Canadians playing with white Canadians on a see-saw in a park; more ethnically identifiable inserts of Japanese dancing or Canadian-Indian children playing with tomahawks. Those children who were exposed to the inserts showed a far greater interest in the non-white children. In fact, the results of the experiments were virtually reversed.

Having seen these brief inserts, almost 70% of them wanted to play with those non-white children. Now, I don't have any illusion that the effect we managed to obtain immediately following the viewing of the programs

would last very long without some support measures. However, it is a positive start. What we're going to have to look for is support material.

The evidence, as it exists with regard to pro-social television, suggests strongly that there is a clearly and strongly beneficial relationship between the support activities children engage in and the programs they watch on TV. If the child manages to get into a situation where he discusses in class what has gone on television, what he has seen in a pro-social sense--cooperation, sharing, etc.--he is much more likely to exhibit similar behaviour. I think what we need to do is develop some kind of wedge that goes along with positive TV programming. So I am sure in the long-term we would see worthwhile results.

WGVH-TV in Boston has been awared a $2,000,000 contract to develop 26 half-hours very much in the same vein as the CBC's two-minute 'Sesame Street' inserts. They focus on Americans of various races and ethnic backgrounds from Chicano to Hawaiian to Alaskan to Porta Rican to white ethnic, etc. The aim here, in this semi-documentary form, is to familiarize nine to twelve year olds with children of other races. To learn about something is the first step, and indeed an intrinsic part of changing one's attitude towards other groups.

One of the examples of this material focuses on a boy with a white mother and a black father. Wouldn't it be interesting to have a series

focussing on Canadians of mixed backgrounds? We have a lot of examples of people who are half English and half French. It must be an interesting experience and they must have something to impart to both sides of our two cultures. Gaining their impressions would be only one of the benefits derived from moving in the direction of pro-social programming.

Gabrielle Clerk est un docteur en psychologie clinique et professeur au département de psychologie, à l'Université de Montréal. Gabrielle Clerk travaille dans une clinique avec des enfants et des adultes, où elle fait des recherches sur les différents comportements d'agressivité.

Ma communication s'appuie sur des prémisses personnelles que je crois bon de définir. Premièrement, l'agressivité en soi n'est pas nécessairement immorale ou destructive. Pouvant être plus ou moins adaptive, on doit la distinguer de la violence, de la brutalité et de l'hostilité. Deuxièmement, j'accepte les conclusions du rapport des Services de Santé des Etats-Unis intitulé "L'impact de la violence à la télévision" qui sont très claires; ce rapport conclut qu'il existe une faible relation causale entre le visionnement de la violence à la télévision et le comportement agressif, mais cette relation causale n'existe que chez certains enfants et adolescents ayant déjà une prédisposition à la violence, et ce, uniquement dans certains contextes.

En troisième lieu, je dirais que la télévision, à mon avis, a beaucoup plus d'impact sur la vie intellectuelle, les techniques d'enseignement et la créativité qu'elle en a sur le comportement violent des individus. Enfin, j'aimerais aborder cette dimension du problème, à savoir que ce n'est pas par le contrôle ou la censure qu'on résoudra le problème de la violence à la télévision.

Si, d'une part, les recherches sur la nature, sur les causes et les effets des différentes formes d'agressivité sont d'un grand intérêt pour les théoriciens, il semble, d'autre part, que le contrôle de l'agressivité est un problème beaucoup plus urgent sur le plan pragmatique que ne le sont les

recherches des théoriciens. Mettant de côté le contrôle de l'agressivité à l'aide d'agents agissant sur la physiologie de l'individu, certaines données tirées des recherches ethnologiques peuvent toutefois servir de guide quant à la dimension psycho-sociale du contrôle de l'agressivité. Des expériences cliniques démontrent que, chez la majorité des espèces animales, l'agressivité suscitée par des situations de conflit, liées au territoire ou au partenaire sexuel, ne conduit jamais à la mort de l'ennemi. Chez toutes les espèces, le contrôle de l'agressivité se fait à l'aide d'activités, de gestes rituels qui ont une valeur communicative très complexe. Ces rituels présentent une ambivalence très profonde car les motivations sous-jacentes peuvent être reliées soit à la peur soit à l'agressivité. Mais ils jouent quand même un rôle très efficace, celui d'éviter la mort de l'ennemi qui est toujours con-spécifique (c'est-à-dire appartenant à la même espèce, la relation prédateur et proie étant une relation très différente), tout en permettant au plus fort d'assurer sa survie et celle de l'espèce.

Il semblerait, cependant, que chez l'homme les choses se passent différemment. Il est le seul qui, parmi l'espèce animale, ira jusqu'à donner la mort à un membre de son espèce et pourra même aller jusqu'à détruire des groupes entiers. Evidemment, chez les humains, les impératifs suscitant conflits et agressivité sont aussi reliés au territoire découlant des facteurs économiques; mais ces impératifs sont souvent masqués par des valeurs beaucoup plus abstraites, comme la langue, la religion, les modes de vie, ce qui rend le phénomène d'agressivité chez les humains, malgré certains parallèles, très différent de celui que l'on rencontre chez l'animal. Mais les humains ont aussi leurs rituels, tant sur

le plan individuel que collectif, et ce dans le but de minimiser ou de contrôler l'agressivité: par exemple, les salutations, les échanges de notes diplomatiques, les conférences de paix, les rencontres sportives. Ces rituels ou conventions, à cause de la multiplicité des conflits et de la disparité économique toujours plus grande entre les collectivités et les individus, sont jugés avec beaucoup de scepticisme par plusieurs quant à leur efficacité, lorsqu'ils ne sont pas ouvertement rejetés comme hypocrites. Ces conventions sont, jusqu'à un certain point, dépassées par l'ampleur des conflits et les tensions aiguës qui caractérisent notre vie. Mais elles continuent d'exister, elles sont entretenues et améliorées car elles sont, par ailleurs, essentielles à notre survie. Certains indices qui nous proviennent des données de la sociologie et de la psychologie des systèmes de communication laissent entrevoir la possibilité d'améliorer nos rituels de contrôle par une utilisation plus grande de la communication verbale par opposition à la communication non verbale. En effet, la violence éclate entre les individus, lorsque, par exemple, aucune autre violence de conflit ne peut être envisagée. Des solutions alternatives ne peuvent tenir que d'échanges verbaux entre les protagonistes. Chaque fois que l'action physique, et non la parole, tient lieu de communication, vous jetez la semence d'une violence future. Ainsi, dans les milieux défavorisés, la punition physique, les échanges de coups sont proportionnels à la pauvreté de la communication verbale; plus cette dernière est utilisée, moins il y a recours aux attaques. Génétiquement, l'action précède la parole mais l'issue d'un développement psycho-social sain est la prédominance du verbe sur l'action. En somme, la parole doit contrôler et retarder l'action. Malheureusement,

la majorité des individus ne parviennent pas à ce stage et c'est là qu'est vraiment le défi pour la télévision, le medium par excellence de l'image et de l'action. Comment ne pas perdre ces caractéristiques tout en faisant une large part aux différents moyens de contrôle, y compris le verbal, dans le contenu de la programmation où l'agressivité est un élément-clef?

Comme je l'ai déjà souligné, la censure n'est pas la réponse. Elle satisfait la conscience de certains d'entre nous, nourrit les préjugés de certains autres, apaise la clameurs des groupes plus revendicateurs, mais la censure ne permet pas à la télévision d'avoir un effet positif, éducateur, dans le sens non moralisateur du mot, sur la communauté. Ce rôle éducateur, elle ne peut y échapper si on se rappelle que, durant les années 60 (les statistiques pour notre décade seraient sûrement les mêmes, sinon plus significatives), une enquête faite aux Etats-Unis et au Canada a permis de constater que l'enfant de six à neuf ans passait quotidiennement deux heures et demie devant l'écran; l'enfant de neuf à quatorze ans, trois heures, tandis qu'à partir de dix ans, 70% des émissions vues par les enfants étaient en fait des émissions destinées aux adultes.

En effet, la télévision dans bien des familles est devenue un parent ou une gardienne substitut, parce qu'un nombre de plus en plus grand d'enfants sont seuls entre le retour de la classe et la venue des parents pour le repas du soir. L'enfant absorbe quantités de messages sans jamais avoir l'occasion de demander des explications ou d'en discuter avec les adultes. Les parents, et ils sont de plus en plus nombreux, ne sont que très heureux

de déléguer aux media de communication le soin de divertir leurs enfants, de les informer et même de les former. Comme on peut le constater, il s'agit beaucoup plus de l'élimination des scènes ou de messages offensants à la télévision mais il lui faut un renouveau de sa politique et de sa philosophie afin de jouer un rôle plus formateur et pour lui permettre d'exploiter tout son potentiel.

Voici, à mon avis, certaines possibilité susceptibles d'amener ce renouveau. En premier lieu, il faudrait abandonner cette distinction entre programmation pour enfants et programmation pour adultes. Cette distinction est basée sur un mythe et ne coïncide aucunement avec les faits; les émissions dites pour adultes sont regardées par la majorité des enfants dès qu'ils peuvent eux-mêmes manipuler l'appareil de télévision et qu'ils commencent à fréquenter des groupes autres que la famille; ce n'est vraiment que chez les enfants d'âge pré-scolaire que les parents contrôlent le visionnement de la télévision. C'est aussi un mythe de croire que l'adulte moyen peut absorber avec un esprit critique n'importe quel contenu d'émission. Il existe, chez toute personne, un côté irrationel et émotif, et la télévision, consciemment ou non, y fait largement appel comme le démontrent les cotes d'écoute élevées de certaines émissions où la violence est loin d'être absente. En effet, l'image de la télévision appelle une participation directe, en profondeur, viscérale et ceci sans délai, délai qui est toutefois essentiel pour qui veut réfléchir. C'est là l'attrait de la télévision. Elle se fait l'alliée et même nourrit cette tendance qui sommeille en chacun de nous, d'agir plutôt que de réfléchir. Il faudrait aussi se rendre compte de l'effet néfaste

pourrait qualifier d'historiques d'une part, de celle qui apparaît dans un contexte contemporain, d'autre part. Des recherches ont démontré que l'impact de la violence dans une émission dont le contexte n'est pas contemporain est très mince; peut de crimes s'inspirent d'une pièce qu'elle soit de Shakespeare ou de Dumas, mais le même contenu dramatique mis dans un contexte contemporain aura un impact tout à fait différent. Dues au fait qu'elles sont centrées sur des caractères contemporains - le policier, le trafiquant de drogues, le révolutionnaire, le fraudeur, l'homme d'affaire malhonnête, - de nombreuses émissions de télévision apparaissent aux yeux de la majorité des téléspectateurs comme une histoire vraie et non comme une création dramatique, et ce, parce qu'ils manquent d'esprit critique. Ce genre d'émissions devient un réservoir de modèles mais aussi une source pour alimenter la vie de fantaisie d'un grand nombre de téléspectateurs. Beaucoup plus grave est le fait que ces émissions ne présentent qu'un aspect ou qu'une phase dans la vie des personnages en jeu et évitent toutes les répercussions sociales des gestes qui sont posés. Les thèmes de ces émissions ne permettent que très rarement aux personnages d'explorer la situation de conflits dans laquelle ils se trouvent afin de trouver une solution autre que celle de la violence. Tout en se piquant de coller à la réalité. Les situations dans lesquelles se retrouvent un policier, un trafiquant de drogues, un fraudeur sont très stéréotypées et on ne voit presque jamais l'individu humain avec ses possibilités d'évolution pour le pire ou le meilleur, avec ses capacités de réagir différemment aux circonstances de la vie.

Quant à la violence réelle, celle que côtoient quotidiennement des collectivités et des individus de certaines parties du globe, elle peut être, par le truchement d'émissions de nouvelles et de documentaires, l'occasion pour la masse de modifier profondément ses attitudes vis-à-vis l'agressivité. Il faudrait que, en un seul instant, à cause de l'importance de la réaction viscérale à l'image, et ceci à l'intérieur d'une même émission et non à des moments différents, que l'écran projette non seulement le geste agressif mais aussi les conséquences du geste, non seulement le visage de l'agresseur mais aussi celui de la victime. De nombreux observateurs de même que plusieurs recherches démontrent que le contrôle du geste agressif est amené chez l'agresseur par la perception d'indices de souffrance, de crainte, d'épouvante-de soumission chez la victime. Ces indices sont rarement soulignés par la télévision et leur absence contribue énormément à faire du geste de violence un geste de robot, alors que ce geste, tant chez l'agressé, comporte une charge émotive très forte. L'écran devrait faire autant de place aux images de protagonistes qui essaient de trouver une solution à un conflit qu'à celles de protagonistes dans une situation de confrontation physique. La télévision devrait innover et tâcher de parler avec son grand public, lors de la diffusion de ces émissions, afin que les échanges verbaux viennent compléter, atténuer dans certains cas, l'information visuelle. Ceci demanderait une collaboration étroite entre techniciens, administrateurs, journalistes, réalisateurs, mais une collaboration plus étroite que celle qui existe déjà en ayant la conviction que la télévision peut être non seulement un reflet partiel de la réalité, mais aussi un agent de changement.

Panel Discussion

In the third discussion period, Rick Salutin, a writer and dramatist, questioned whether the content and areas of study selected by the Symposium organizers were really worthwhile for a Canadian discussion of the subject.

"We've had a historical introduction which consisted of a film on the Senate hearings in Washington, a history of the study of mass media in the U.S., a literary discussion this morning that used parallels from Greece and Elizabethan England and reports from social scientists either American or American-trained. Is it irrelevant that none of the English-speaking speakers have mentioned anything about Canada?"

He objected to the tendency of social scientists to view all children as essentially the same regardless of where they are. He suggested Canadian children are quite different from American children just as violence in Canada is significantly different from American violence. "The racial strife that has existed here has not been between blacks and whites. It has been English versus French, geographically separated and institutionally mediated. Furthermore, there haven't been the head-on urban confrontations or the disputes over an unpopular war."

He concluded that it was important to recognize that American television violence in Canada is quite different in social relevance and impact

from when it is shown on American screens.

James Teevan agreed with Mr. Salutin's remarks suggesting that examinations of the effects of televised violence should not be conducted in a social vacuum.

"If in fact television does have an effect, why is it that there is so much less violence in Canada than there is in the U.S.? If we are watching the same television, how does it get translated into violent behaviour in one country and not in the other? Obviously the social context is important."

The two other panelists, however, were quick to disagree. Dr. Goldberg felt child development, particularly child reaction to television fare, is constant on both sides of the border.

"We've done studies looking at the effects of advertising on children. You might want to argue that Canada is a less commercial society than the United States. However, the results of our studies on Canadian kids were exactly the same as those found in a couple of American studies. Children are just not that different."

Dr. Clerk agreed with Dr. Goldberg, stating that in the basic issues of violence the question of borders is quite unimportant.

" I think we deceive ourselves by thinking that we have a specific kind of violence here in Canada which is different from the United States. One of the things I learned as a clinical psychologist

dealing with people in both languages in Canada, is that when an English person hates and when a French-Canadian hates, both situations are frightening and you very easily forget what the language is at that moment."

David Helwig, the literary manager for CBC drama, felt that the pre-occupation with American studies which Mr. Salutin had noticed simply reflected the overwhelming dominance American programming has on Canadian television. Mr. Helwig pointed out the drama department of CBC produces approximately 70 to 80 hours of programming a year. He doubted CTV or Global television matched that amount. On the other hand, each of the three American networks produce several hundred hours of programming a year. With this in mind, Mr. Helwig suggested the Symposium might be doing a little more than summoning up great resources of self-righteousness and turning them against a brick wall.
"I may have found Dr. Liebert's talk immensely worrying and convincing but we can do nothing, as far as I know, about CBS, NBC or ABC unless that CRTC is willing to go to the extent of closing the 49th parallel and jamming the stations in Watertown, Syracuse, Buffalo, and so on."

National Film Board producer Guy Cote suggested speakers at the Symposium had been too quick to concentrate on the anti-social, morally depreciating aspects of violence. He recalled that one of the most violent stories he ever encountered as a child was not found in Batman or Superman comics, but rather in church on Good Friday. Each year the

story of Crucifixion was recounted with graphic detail, and throughout the year plaster reproductions of the crucified Christ were constantly on view. Reflecting back on the experience, he realizes that his attention had constantly been drawn to the victim of the violence and not to those who had reflicted it. Thus exposure to the story became a civilizing rather than a brutalizing experience. Mr. Cote wondered if some of the elements of violence televised today might not have the same socially positive effects that that tale of the injustice committed 2000 years ago has had.

Sidney Newman wondered if there was too much preoccupation with pre-school children and not enough thought being given to the effects of television on adolescents. He suggested children begin making increasingly complex judgements at the age of ten or eleven. "That's when, in my view, Canadian kids begin to realize they are Canadian. It's at that point that they begin to learn about their society and to change accordingly."

Dr. Liebert disagreed, stating that most evidence shows "the major formation of much of what a child thinks does occur before the age of twelve."

Michel Landsberg, an associate editor of Chatelaine Magazine concluded that discussion with the suggestion that those persons worried about the particular effects of violence on Canadian children may be deluding

themselves.

"We used to have Canadian children, I'm not sure we do now. When I wrote an article critical of children's programming, we were deluged with hundreds of letters from Canadian children defending the American way of life, telling me that 'The Brady Bunch' was a wonderful example of how we Americans ought to live. I didn't get any letters from children mentioning that they were not Americans. Most of them thought they were and I think research in schools will bear this out. That's one of the serious effects aside from violence that we haven't discussed here."

Symposium on Television Violence
Colloque sur la violence à la télévision

SOME THEMES IN RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF TELEVISED VIOLENCE*

*one of a series of papers prepared by the following researchers:

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Michèle Baril
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Views expressed in these papers do not necessarily reflect those of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission

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Introduction

There has been, in North America, a long standing view that the popular arts have a corrupting effect on those exposed to them. Paralleling the growth of the mass media, public attention has, in turn, been focussed on the potentially negative influence of the newspaper, cinema, comic book, radio and television. For a variety of reasons, deriving mainly from its nature and characteristics, television now stands unique and alone as an object of strong public concern.

Unlike written communications or the older media of radio and silent films, television appeals to two senses simultaneously with an integrated message. Both these senses - vision and audition - are the most highly developed senses in man and those on which he relies most heavily for gaining information from his environment. In addition, television embodies motion and the human visual system is especially tuned to and held by the perception of motion.

Television reflects a growing development towards the intrinsic credibility of communication techniques. In part, this credibility is related to the "vividness" of the medium defined in terms of the senses to which it appeals. Media

which appeal to several senses are considered more vivid than those reaching only one. Television and movies are thus in a class by themselves as effective media. In addition, television demonstrates a high degree of "fidelity" in terms of the correspondence between an event and its reproduction. Thus, the combination of vividness and fidelity in televised presentations lends the medium an intrinsic authenticity; this provides television with an implicit internal validation of its content.

Another outstanding feature of television relates to its pervasiveness as a mass medium. Statistics reveal that television ownership and accessibility has virtually reached the saturation point in North America. Unlike the movies, television does not require admission fees, a darkened room and expensive equipment. Further, in contrast to printed communications, television demands of an audience little sophistication and no reading ability. As such, its appeal to children is particularly striking; their access is limited only by their ability to switch on the set and process the audio-visual information.

All these factors (i.e. television's vividness and high fidelity, its inherent authenticity and credibility, its massive availability to the audience regardless of age and

socio-economic class) have placed television in a vulnerable position as an object of public concern.

The relationship between violent programming and its effects on the attitudes, perception and behaviour of the audience has aroused the interest of concerned citizens for two decades. The politics of public concern with media violence has been reflected in the creation of research programmes and support for scientific studies of various kinds.

In the past twenty-five years, literally thousands of research studies on the effects of television and film have been published. The broad thrust of the findings of these studies has been to establish a connection between viewing violence and various forms of anti-social behaviour. However, an extensive review of the literature reveals a number of objections, broadly methodological in nature, that have been raised to studies and their findings:

(1) The studies derive from a faulty scientific world-view, that human behaviour can be studied with the methodologies of the physical sciences.

(2) Those studies conducted under laboratory conditions are not applicable to real life situations.

(3) Field studies, conducted outside the laboratory, cannot take into account the full impact of the many other factors.

(4) The cause and effect relationships are not always clear and unambiguous.

(5) The methodological diversity of specific studies diminishes their comparability.

(6) Most studies deal only with short-term effects; there is a lack of a body of long-term research.

Perhaps the most concise and lucid critical discussion is provided by the respected British sociologist, J.D. Halloran,[1.2.] Secretary to the Television Research Committee (1963), and professor of Communications at the University of Leicester.

Six broad themes are apparent in the literature: catharsis, arousal, desensitization, imitation, the learning of violence as a value, and perceptions of a violent environment. The remainder of this bibliographical essay is organized around these themes. Lists of more general works, and of works in the related, but less-developed area of research into pro-social effects of film and television are to be found at the end.

Catharsis

The concept of catharsis is an ancient one first appearing in Aristotle's works on aesthetics and developed primarily in the Poetics. Within the Greek philosophical tradition, it was considered undesirable that the emotions should be stirred; from the poet's point of view, it was inevitable. Aristotle's genius found the way out of this dilemma by positing his famous doctrine of "katharsis": "Tragedy is an imitation of a worthy action complete in itself...which by means of pity and fear achieves the catharsis of emotions of that kind." The emotions when aroused are at the same time 'purged', leaving the spectator in a more serene condition of mind and a heightened state of self-mastery.

Some authors note that Aristotle's use of the word catharsis applied only to the "tragic" feelings of grief and fear which could be discharged through active expression by the audience. However, in its modern-day usage, theorists argue that much the same kind of 'purging' could be achieved - this time in terms of aggressive impulses - through vicarious participation in observed aggression. The strongest contemporary proponent of this view must certainly be Seymour Feshback, a professor of psychology at the University

of California. His research, primarily using field study techniques, revealed that the observation of aggressive content on television reduced or regulated the expression of aggression by the viewer.[3.] Feshback speculated that the dramatic presentations of televised violence provided his subjects with an opportunity to work through their hostile urges in socially acceptable fantasies.[4.] This proposition has derived some support from psychoanalytic writings which recognize that the cognitive activity of fantasy - whether dream or reverie - may enable children and adults to delay and control the immediate expression of impulses. If this be the case, then the process of catharsis as a result of exposure to aggressive content could be evaluated as emotionally beneficial and socially constructive.

But the idea of cathartic effects has not gone uncontested. The conclusions reached by Feshback are at odds with the preponderance of experimental[5.] and correlational[6.7.] research. A substantial number of studies have, in fact, shown that under a variety of conditions, the observation of violence increases rather than decreases subsequent aggressiveness.

Arousal

Perhaps one of the most interesting and complex models linking communications media to aggressive behaviour involves the concept of arousal. Various configurations of the model have arisen out of the investigations by social psychologists into the relationship between a person's physiological state and his cognitive state; his cognitive state and his subsequent behaviour.

A variety of circumstances may serve to create physiological arousal, and because the arousal being discussed is considered general in effect, measures such as heart beat, blood pressure, galvanic skin response and respiratory rate have been used to index the change. One of the first experiments in this area directly manipulated a subject's physiological condition by introducing adrenalin into the bloodstream.[8.] Other research has given some evidence that such diverse stimuli as extreme temperature, physical exercise and loud noise may all activate a general systemic arousal.[9. 10.] In addition, some authors have put forth the idea that the overt content of a message or presentation may be sufficient in itself to cause arousal.[11.] What is particularly interesting

however, is the discovery that the internal arousal experienced by the subject is often labelled according to the social conditions surrounding the participant. So for example, when the subject is placed in contact with aggressively behaving associates, he tends to label his internal aroused state as anger or aggression.[12.]

These initial formulations provide some clue to the connection between emotional arousal and aggressive behaviour. Perhaps the simplest theory advocates the idea that aggressive or violent content evokes in the receiver a general emotional arousal. The content itself determines the social situation so that the subject labels his emotional arousal as aggression. In such a situation, his drive for cognitive consistency may lead the subject to behave in an aggressive manner consistent with the internally labelled state.[13.]

Alternatively, Berkowitz[14.] has proposed that prior arousal may cause a person to be more receptive to aggressive cues or "micro-behaviours" contained in the communication material. These cues then provide a sort of immediate predisposition to aggressive behaviour. In this conceptualization, the arousal state is a facilitator of the process linking violent materials to aggressive action, rather than a direct antecedent condition. Tannenbaum[15.]

fundamentally agrees with the model proposed by Berkowitz but offers a variation that puts emphasis on the level of arousal elicited by the aggressive stimuli as more important than the mere presence of aggressive cues. A recent study by Zillmann[16]. ties in with an earlier finding that communication-free or aggression-free messages such as excessive heat or noise may cause a high level of emotional arousal. He proposed that the observed effects of aggressive communications were not so much the consequence of exposure to aggressive stimuli per se as they were the result of the excitatory potential associated with communications. Thus, for example, Zillman found that erotic communications, because they were generally associated with great excitation, tended to intensify post-exposure aggressiveness to a high degree.

All the research outlined above has as its focal point a theoretical model which recognizes that communication messages - especially those featuring dramatic stimuli - can evoke emotional arousal and facilitate subsequent aggressive behaviour. The experiments seem to prove at the very least that people exhibit a measurable emotional responsivity to observed violence. What happens though, when these emotional responses are evoked again and again?

Desensitization

There have been various attempts to explain the phenomenon of citizen "uninvolvement". This often manifests itself in a situation where passersby fail to come to the aid of a victim within range of their helping. Some authors advocate the opinion that the abundance of brutality and violence in the mass media has effectively hardened television viewers to acts of violence, blunting their emotional sensitivity and reducing their conscience and concern.[17.]

The previous discussion on arousal noted some of the experiments dealing with physiological and emotional arousal in the face of exposure to portrayed violence. However, additional research in the field brings up the possibility that repeated observation of scenes of violence may result in a marked decrease in the strength of emotional reactions. The experiments of Berger[18.] and Lazarus[19.] tend to verify this hypothesis. They exposed their subjects to films of a primitive tribal ritual involving painful and bloody mutilations. They found that viewers became increasingly less emotionally responsive with repeated observations of this type of scene, suggesting

a progressive desensitization to a specific type of filmed violence. Victor Kline[20.] extended the research a step further by testing the hypothesis that physiological effects are brought about within the child who is constantly exposed to violence on television. His subjects were divided into high and low TV watchers and though the samples were found to differ on the socioeconomic dimension, there was no evidence to suggest that this would affect their autonomic/emotional arousal to a violent film. The results of the several studies using two different measures of involuntary response corroborated each other and suggested that some children who are heavy TV watchers (and see more violence) may become habituated or desensitized to violence generally.

While television viewers may become habituated to media violence, it is a large step to assume that they will lose their aversion to actual violence when it occurs in a real-life situation. However, some evidence from modern behaviour therapy lends credibility to the belief that such a process <u>could</u> occur. The introduction of anxiety-provoking stimuli within a relaxed and safe environment has proved effective in reducing and eliminating phobic behaviour.[21.] Apparently the effect of such a procedure is that phobic patients gradually lose their severe anxiety and are eventually able to tolerate direct

confrontation with that which they feared. This suggests the possibility that viewers who initially experience intense anxiety in the face of aggressive scenes, may learn to tolerate this kind of behaviour on and off the screen after repeated exposure to televised violence in the safety and comfort of their homes. Additionally, the repetition of media violence may have the effect of making viewers more willing to actually involve themselves in aggressive actions when provoking circumstances arise.

Imitation

Much of human social behaviour is learned through observation and imitation. The vividness, fidelity and ubiquity of television makes it easy to believe that children and adults alike may take the behaviour they observe on TV as a model for their own. It is within this context that behavioural scientists have asked whether viewing violent television has a significant impact on the audience: whether people may learn techniques and strategies of aggressive behaviour through their exposure to media violence.

The notion of imitation of violence as it is applied to television viewing has its roots in this process of observational learning. However, there are at least two conditions that must be met before the connection can be made.

1) The observer must acquire and be able to reproduce what he has seen or heard.
2) The observer must accept the behaviour as a guide for his own actions.

A striking series of studies by Albert Bandura[22.] and his associates have demonstrated clearly that under suitable

circumstances, observation alone can be sufficient to add novel aggressive responses to the viewer's behavioural repertoire. In addition, recent research has determined that a large proportion of the aggressive behaviour learned by observation can be remembered over long periods of time.[23.]

The research noted above deals mainly with the acquisition and retention of filmed aggressive responses within the laboratory setting. The results were obtained under highly specific circumstances. The subjects were tested often right after observation and in an environment that closely replicated the filmed situation. Nevertheless, there seems to be little doubt that the potential for the aggressive response was learned. However, this does not necessarily imply that the behaviour will be performed in real life. In order for this to be true, the viewers must have adopted the modeled behaviour into their own pattern of actions, ready to perform if and when the relevant situations arise in their own lives.

There are now numerous documented cases of direct imitation of television violence by children and adults. The more spectacular examples reach the front pages of our newspapers. There is also a great deal of evidence linking the amount of violence seen on television to the degree

of aggression manifested in behaviour and attitudes. Most of the evidence derives from correlational field studies but there has been some work done in this area with the aid of experimental investigations. Several examples will suffice. McLeod, Atkin and Chaffee[24.] examined the relationship between viewing televised violence and a variety of measures of aggressive behaviour. They reached the following conclusions:

> "Our research shows that among boys and girls at two grade levels (junior high and senior high) the more the child watches violent television fare, the more aggressive he is likely to be...Adolescents viewing high levels of violent content on television tend to have high levels of aggressive behaviour, regardless of television viewing time, socioeconomic status, or school performance."

Likewise, working with adolescent subjects, McIntyre and Teevan[25.] found a consistent relationship between objective ratings of the amount of violence on programs which the subjects reported watching and many kinds of deviant behaviour. In one of the few longitudinal studies ever carried out, Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder and Huesmann[26.] designed a test to determine whether the amount of televised violence watched by children at age nine influenced the degree to which they were aggressive ten years later. The investigators reported the following results:

> "The most plausible single causal hypothesis would appear to be that watching violent television in the third grade leads to the building of

> aggressive habits...a substantial component of aggression at age nineteen can be predicted better by the amount of television violence the child watched in the third grade (age nine) than by any other causal variable measured..."

Naturally the imitation of televised violence may be contingent upon several mediating factors. For example, imitative aggression seems more likely to occur when the real-life situation appears similar to the observed scene of violence. Likewise, the consequence of aggression, namely whether it was rewarded or punished, may operate to elicit or inhibit imitation. Thirdly, the presentation of violence as an effective means of achieving one's goals may serve to encourage viewers to actually use some of the techniques of aggression that they have learned from the media. Perhaps this last condition poses a serious concern on its own. Beyond teaching specific ways of perpetrating aggression and mayhem, television may convey a more general message: violence succeeds.

" Violence Succeeds "

The overt acquisition and acceptance of some violent action as portrayed through the mass media is by no means the only kind of "effect" television may have. To the extent that television is involved in socializing human personalities, there is an inherent possibility that people will acquire their values and definitions of appropriate behaviour from the messages of television.

By and large, there has been very little systematic content analysis of television's offerings. One of the earliest such studies was done by Larsen, Gray and Fortis in 1963.[27.] Eighteen programmes were viewed with the aim of exploring and illuminating the goals and methods portrayed on television. The following results were obtained: 1) violent methods were the single most popular means employed by characters to reach desired goals, and 2) socially disproved methods were more frequently portrayed as being successful than were approved methods. In a more recent study, George Gerbner[28.] examined the messages for violence contained in television entertainment programming. A general impression gleaned from the selected messages and their implicit norms suggested that violence

often accompanied conflict, was a successful means of reaching personal ends and was not usually punished. Forces of law enforcement were indistinguishable from others insofar as they also used violence as the predominant mode of conflict resolution. In short, violence is presented as a typical means of achieving virtually any type of goal. Further, the use of violence whether sanctioned or not, is likely to be successful in obtaining such goals.

Television violence has sometimes been justified on the basis of the moral it preaches - namely that the "bad guy" is punished for his misdeeds. However, when in an attempt to show that crime does not pay there is violent retribution, its main effect is still to teach violence as the way to solve problems. In addition, there is some experimental evidence that disputes the "morality" lesson of violence. Albert Bandura[29.] showed young children two films exhibiting a great deal of inter-personal aggression. The films were identical except for the endings. In one film the aggressor was rewarded, as a result of his aggressive behaviour, by sole control over the toys and food he desired. In the second film, the aggressive behaviour was severely punished and the aggressor defeated in his attempt for control. Nevertheless, in a later evaluation, many children expressed preference for the

aggressive character, whether rewarded or punished. Bandura's comment on the meaning of this finding deserves to be quoted:

> "The finding that successful villainy may outweigh the viewers' value systems has important implications...In most televised programs the "bad guy" gains control over important resources and amasses considerable social and material rewards through a series of aggressive manoeuvers, whereas his punishment is generally delayed until just before the last commercial. Thus children have opportunities to observe many episodes in which antisocially aggressive behaviour has paid off abundantly and, considering that immediate rewards are much more influential than delayed punishment in regulating behaviour, the terminal punishment of the villain may have a relatively weak inhibitory effect on the viewer."

Perception of a Violent Environment

It is important to consider not only the effectiveness of television in promoting specific kinds of behaviour or values, but also to think about the overall impact of television violence on the world view held by its audience. To begin to understand the nature of this impact, it has been necessary to undertake systematic and careful analysis of the content of programming, with a view to determining the actual incidence of violent action appearing on home television screens. There have been several such studies, some highlights of which are outlined below:

(1) In 1960, the U.S. National Association of Educational Broadcasters[30.] monitored one week of Los Angeles television. They recorded 144 murders, 13 kidnappings, seven torture scenes, four lynchings and several miscellaneous acts of violence. The same group carried out a trend analysis which showed the proportion of prime time television devoted to violent action drama to have risen from 17 percent in 1954 to 60 percent in 1961.

(2) In 1964, the U.S. National Association for Better Radio and Television[31.] recorded almost 200 hours

per week of crime-oriented action drama. In 1968, the same organization[32.] announced the now much-quoted estimate that a child of average viewing habits would, over the course of ten years between the ages of five and fifteen, view the destruction of more than 13,000 persons on television.

(3) In the United Kingdom, a study was undertaken with the cooperation of the BBC to analyze the amount and nature of television violence on British television programmes from November 1970 to May 1971.[33.] In all, 1558 programmes were monitored and a total of 1889 major violent incidents were recorded, a rate of 1.3 per programme and 2.2 per hour.

(4) On of the most elaborate and celebrated studies of televised violence has been conducted by George Gerbner of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania during the late 1960's.[34.] In 1969, he found that eight of every ten drama programmes contained violence; the violent acts occurred at a rate of five per programme, and eight per hour. Gerbner has continued his analysis of network television dramas, issued as annual Violence Profiles. In the most recent profile,[35.] compiled after monitoring in the fall of 1973, Gerbner reports that the violent index is somewhat lower, however violence remains a staple element of dramatic programming.

(5) In the late summer of 1974, the Social Communications Division of the Research Branch of the Canadian-Radio-Television Commission undertook an analysis of 55 entertainment programmes on two Canadian television stations.[36.] A total of 108 violent episodes were recorded in the 36 hours monitored, a frequency of 3.0 violent acts per hour. The great majority of violent programmes and violent acts broadcast were found to occur in productions of American origin.

It is often stated that dramatic programmes are just stories and the world they depict a fantasy world; that there is no reason to suppose that viewers would apply the image derived from the stories to the real world around them. However, there is a considered possibility that the implicit authenticity of television is lending credibility to fantasy productions.

Although television entertainment does not provide an accurate picture of the real world, there is some experimental evidence that children, adolescents and adults believe it does.[37.] Scientists report that many children associate television violence with real-life violence, that crime shows tell about life the way it really is.[38.] But the most convincing documentation of this effect comes from the sixth annual Violence Report issued by professors George Gerbner and Larry Gross.[39.] As part of the study, some viewers were asked to estimate

the possibility of encountering violence in their own lives, the proportion of crimes that are violent and the number of people working in law enforcement - all questions to which television gives quite different answers than those dictated by actual statistics. The results of the study showed that heavy television viewers tend to overestimate the danger of violence in everyday life, significantly more so than light viewers. This "cultivation differential" showed up strongly in those under thirty years of age - the first generation to grow up with television.

This suggests that television may be having a harmful cumulative effect: the population as a whole, and certain portions of it in particular, are made more apprehensive about social dangers than actual conditions warrant.

Conclusion

There have been literally thousands of studies dealing with the impact of televised violence on the physiology and psychology of the human being. Many of these investigations represent an academic interest in cause and effect relationships. But a great deal of the research reflects another concern: the influence television may have in shaping our behaviour, attitudes and perceptions. This paper has attempted to highlight some of the more obvious and recurring themes deriving from the research to date. The list of references relating to each section will provide further material and avenues of exploration for the interested reader.

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SECTION THREE: THE INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

Although the use and frequency of violent material on television is greatly influenced by certain mass-marketing elements and the competitive logic of the North American broadcasting system, very little systematic effort has been devoted to examining this industry perspective of violence in television.

This segment of the Symposium was devoted to exploring the production and system realities of television violence with particular attention to Canadian production industry problems and potential. Film director Ted Kotcheff examined the question of how quality can be improved in Canadian popular-entertainment programming. The panel discussion which followed was titled "Canadian industry realities: Can we do without violence?"

How Can Quality be Improved in Canadian Popular Programming?

Ted Kotcheff's most recent critical acclaim as a film director came with 'The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz', which won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival. Born in Toronto of immigrant parents, his earliest career following

graduation from the University of Toronto was less auspicious, beginning with work in a slaughterhouse followed by stints in the Goodyear foam rubber section, and as shortorder cook, waiter and dishwasher. Taking his father's advice that a more rewarding career existed within CBC, Kotcheff applied for employment as a writer, was hired as a stagehand, and was discovered by Norman Jewison who made him his assistant. When Jewison moved on, Kotcheff remained with Sydney Newman, and by age 24 was the country's youngest TV director, working on CBC's'General Motors Theatre'. He departed Canada in 1957 for Britain where he again joined Newman for production of 'Armchair Theatre'. He was twice voted Britain's top director. In the 1960s Kotcheff expanded into stage and film. His feature films include 'Life at the Top'; 'Two Gentlemen Sharing', which was the official British entry in the 1970 Venice Film Festival; 'Outback', an invited entry to the 1971 Cannes Film Festival; 'Billy Two Hats' and 'Duddy Kravitz'. Future plans include a film based on Richler's 'Cocksure', and a social comedy filmed in Los Angeles and entitled 'Dick and Jane'.

I was speaking recently to a friend of mine in London, a very distinguished British television dramatist named Clive Ecston. He asked me what this Symposium was about and I told him we were going to discuss whether violence in TV drama is brutalizing the general public. He said, "Well, you tell them it's violence in the general public that's brutalizing TV drama". It reminded

me of an incident when I was fifteen. I was working in a diner that belonged to my father that was situated very close to Maple Leaf Gardens. One day a wrestler called Sky High Lee came in with his head covered with bandages, sores and burns all over his face. I said, "Jesus, guy--what happened?" He said, "You know, I play the villain. Well, I won last night". It seems that going from the ring to the dressing room, an old lady smashed a bottle on his head and five people stubbed out their cigarettes in his face. His final statement was, "You know, the general public's the worst group of people walking the streets today".

Wrestling is actually a very interesting phenomenon. I always used to wonder why something that was so patently false, so put on, so staged, would have such popularity amongst the people who went to see it. I've concluded it was like a ritual mask, a morality play. There was the hero and the villain. In the middle was the referee, who was kind of like betrayed authority, the man who never sees the dirty tricks the villain pulls on the good guy. Every time the authority figure turns its back, the villain rubs his fist in the eye of the hero and when the authority figure turns around, the villain pretends innocence. In a curious way, I think that life to the people who watch wrestling is stupid, unfair and unjust. I don't think it's merely howls of aggression that take place at wrestling matches--I think it's howls for justice.

When people like Sky High Lee and the villains triumph, I think there are cries of anguish and pain. I think this is the reason that Sky got punished, and I think that perhaps it's also some kind of insight into why the police series on television are also so popular.

Early on in my directorial career, I was directing a live television play in the CBC series called 'On Camera', sponsored by Maxwell House Coffee. The play had an English setting and at one point the lady of the house invited the Scotland Yard inspector to have tea and crumpets. The agency man was horrified and rushed over and asked me to please change it to coffee. "Coffee", I said, "Who's ever heard of coffee and crumpets?" I mean, when did you last have high coffee? Certainly, advertising people are under no illusions as to the penetrative power of the images presented on television and they work on the principle that people's behaviour and living habits can be altered by what they see on the box.

I had a far more disturbing experience in this connection shortly afterwards, when I began to direct TV plays in England. I did a play that was entirely set in the underground --London's subway--and we had contacted London Transport to assist us in providing elements for the decor. The public relations man for London Transport asked for a copy of the script. After he read it he phoned me in a panic because the

play opened with a man standing on the subway platform contemplating suicide by throwing himself in front of the train. The P.R. man begged me not to show this scene on television. He told me that at least half a dozen people would commit suicide in exactly the same way the day after the broadcast. I said, "Rubbish, you're just dramatizing". He continued in vain to try to dissuade me. After the broadcast, he rang to inform me that five people had jumped in front of subway trains the day after the broadcast. Make of it what you will, it was a disquieting experience for me, to say the least. It was the first time I really began to concern myself with the relationship between myself and my audience. Did television offer models to translate appetites and impulses into action?

As a director, my intention in my work is to change things, to change people, their values, their attitudes, their aspirations. As Arnold Wescer said, "All art leads to socialism", echoing a statement of Matthew Arnold's to the effect that all art aspires to a classless society. I want my programmes to have an effect on my audience, to move them, to disturb them, to commit a kind of emotional and intellectual violence on them. For example, I directed a television film called, 'Edna--The Inebriate Woman', a story of a down-and-out --a woman you see standing on street corners with five overcoats on and ll her worldly possessions in two shopping bags. It was cast in the form of a dramatized documentary and

it had a gratifying, massive response from the audience. From the enormous mail I received, I know that attitudes towards the Ednas of the world were changed in a very basic way. So, if one of my TV plays can have what I feel to be a moral effect, how can I deny that it can have an immoral effect? We know that there have been immoral films, as anyone who has seen the Nazi anti-semitic films of the Thirties can testify, and we pass legislation to prevent plays that incite violence against a certain race. But, what about violence against a person?

However, as much as I dislike gratuitous and sensationalized depictions of violence, I think I dislike censorship more. I find it stupid, repugnant and unnecessary. I refuse to hand over to an authority what I should see and hear and certainly what I should direct. Censors that I've had to deal with are certainly the most curious people I've ever encountered, possessing extraordinarily lurid imaginations and sniffing out double entendres where no one else dreamt they existed. It has often been noted and confirmed by my experience that British censors in film and television are hard on physical violence and liberal on matters of sex and profanity, whereas American censorship is tolerant about violence and ferocious on sex and bad language.

In this respect, I had an amusing experience when I directed

a two-hour version of Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men' for ABC Television in America. The ABC censor, a very tense young lady, had three notes for me. The first contained the usual list of damns and hells to be cut. After a lot of horse-trading between us--"Listen, I'll give you three damns for one hell", and so on--she and I came to a settlement. The second concerned a scene where George and another farmhand discuss Curly, the boss's son. It's one of the best know scenes in 'Of Mice and Men'.

George: "Why does Curly always wear a glove on his left hand?"

Farmhand: "He got married to a pretty wife".

George: "So?"

Farmhand: "Glove's full of vaseline".

Well, our censor lady went bananas. This whole scene had to be cut. The explanation that it was a rather touching detail--that Curly wanted one hand free of the cuts and callouses attendant on heavy farm work, a soft hand with which to touch his wife--carried no weight whatsoever with her. Vaseline meant perversion--so out. Only after the star, George Segal, threatened to walk out on the production if this famous scene was cut, was it kept in in a compromised form. A third note discussed a scene near the end of the play. A posse is formed to find Lennie who has inadvertently killed Curly's wife, and Curly keeps repeating: "I'm going to shoot him in the guts, I'm going to shoot him in the guts". The lady said, "You've got to cut 'guts'". So I asked if we could replace it with

"I'm going to ram my shotgun down his throat and pull the trigger"? "Oh, yes", she said, "That would be perfectly acceptable".

The problems of censorship are obviously fearsome. I've never met anyone who has been able to explain satisfactorily how we are to distinguish between acceptable depictions of violence and unacceptable ones, or who shall distinguish, and on what principles. I have found, as well, that sometimes, under the guise of professed concern over violence, people were really trying to censor ideas. That's why I think that we should treat a word that has been floating around this conference, 'control', with great care. I think we should resist it very, very stoutly. But I must add that I do agree with Lister Sinclair's statement yesterday that one of the things this Symposium should be doing is attempting to define "good violence" and "bad violence". Hopefully, if more good plays are presented on television, restoring some kind of balance in our viewing, the question of censorship will be obviated.

The controversy about violence has been raging in England for the last ten years. It came to a climax when Pamela Hanford Johnson wrote her book, On Iniquity, which dealt with the moors murders: a series of sadistic killings of children, supposedly inspired by the reading of the Marquis de Sade's A Hundred and

Twenty Nights in Sodom and Gamorrha. For Ms. Johnson and Mary Whitehouse, that scourge of British television, and others like them, all the ills of modern society are attributable to pornographic literature and violent films and television broadcasts. The way they talked, you would have thougnt violence was invented ten years ago, that we lived in an age of gold and that suddenly, engulfed by a flood of pornography and violence, we have dropped into hell. Well, the history of man is primarily an endless saga of political violence. Peace, civilized behaviour and humane feelings are not the norm from which violence is an aberration. I'm afraid the reverse is true and this is not to be blamed on television and films. In fact, we live in a far more decent and humane society now than ever before. We don't have public hangings, we don't have child labour. Picketing strikers are not shot at as my father was in the Thirties and I don't see signs on beaches in Toronto any more saying, "Jews and Foreigners Keep Out". I'm not sure that film and television have not played a large part in humanizing our society, far outweighing any damage attributed to them by their detractors.

I know that a lot of the current absorption by film makers, especially American film makers, in violent death and physical destruction was initiated by the assassination of President Kennedy and the violence that ensued in the Sixties. Arthur Penn has said it was the film of Kennedy's death that was the direct

inspiration for that extraordinary concluding sequence depicting the death of Bonnie and Clyde. 'Soldier Blue', showing the American cavalry as butchers spearing Indian babies, cutting women's breasts off and mutilating old people, which actually happened, was a direct response to the news of Mai Lai. My own film, 'Outback', was an attempt to find some answers to the violence in the Sixties and an attempt to deal with the roots of violence in all of us. I think there's a new pursuit of total frankness in the cinema. The prevalent feeling is, we must get rid of all the hypocrisies and lies that have affected films - lies that have got us into so much trouble.

It was supposed by many liberals that with increasing prosperity, higher standards of living and the spread of social welfare and concern for the poor, the disadvantaged and the old, crime and violence would diminish and disappear. Instead, in the Sixties there was an inexplicable, irrational, sharp upsurge in violence - urban guerillas, kidnapping, highjackings, political killings. Crime rates leaped and, horror of horros, intelligent and wealthy people were involved in the crimes. Liberal nostrums seemed to have failed. Now everyone's looking around for something to blame and TV and film are the easiest candidates. Television seems to be a fifth columnist enterin the privacy of one's home with stealty, subverting morality without one even noticing. I was surprised yesterday at the nihilism displayed by the morning

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panel who felt discussing violence on television was irrelevant. They distrusted and disliked the television medium itself and if they had their way we would get rid of all television. Well, for someone like me who makes his living dreaming up dreams for public consumption, this attitude seems strangely unreal, leading to a dead end. One of the panel reduced television to a bombardment of electrons. Well, that's like saying a film is a piece of celluloid 10,000 feet long and 35 millimeters wide, painting is a hunk of canvas, and a novel some mashed up pine trees. I think the medium is neutral. We should abandon formalistic discussions and instead be discussing what we ahould put on the damn thing.

That leads me to the question of what Canadian drama ought to be doing and whether or not it should differentiate itself from the American treatment of drama. Well, first of all, I think we in Canada have already differentiated ourselves from the American television industry. We have chosen the British model -- a mixture of commercial television and public broadcasting -- a healthy marriage, I think. Secondly, there's hardly any drama on American television worth speaking about for us to use as a model. The one driving force behind television in America is the maximization of profits and the sole justification of a programme is its financial success measured in terms of share of the audience and cost per thousand. Tele-

vision is conceived not as a means of communication, but as a sales instrument to promote commodities. People who work in American television are, in my experience, irretrievably compromised and their programmes are totally unwatchable. The divorce between the intelligensia, if I can use such an old-fashioned word, and television is complete. The best minds and talents avoid it completely. With minor exceptions, I can't think of a single writer, producer or director of any merit working in American television drama. And this is not merely my opinion. I can tell you that in Los Angeles to write or direct for television is to proscribe yourself forever from working in film. The film industry feels that anyone who would work on American television series, with its incredibly low standards of quality in production, must be a tasteless hack. I must add that this feeling does not apply to anyone working in British or Canadian television. There was a great period in American television drama in the early Fifties - the 'Philco-Goodyear Playhouse', 'Playhouse Ninety', 'Studio One' - when interesting plays were written by dramatists such as Reginald Rose and Rod Serling, and directed by people like Franklin Shaffner, Robert Mulligan, and John Frankenheimer. The reason that these anthology drama series were killed was explained to me by an account executive for General Motors. He said that the plays were just too real. The presentation of real human problems aroused serious emotions. The endings, as in life,

were inconclusive, Often these plays depressed and upset. As a result, in spite of very high ratings for 'Philco-Goodyear Playhouse', the sales figures for Philco radios and Goodyear tires were not going up. Why? Because people were having gloomy associations with their products. Well, whether this was true or not, a television executive in America once told me that if the material the television audience sees is too demanding emotionally, if they have their emotions wrung out, it means they're not going to be able to sit and watch all night which, after all, is the desiterata. So give them formula drama, straight, vigorous-action stuff. Like junk food, you can eat lots of it because it contains no nourishment. As a result, all significant writing and directing talent have abandoned the medium in America. Ultimately this is why there is so much violence on television. As Raymond Chandler said, "When in doubt, have a man come through the door with a gun", this is the easiest way to involve au audience. Conflit is basic to drama, and this is the most basic kind of conflict you can have. One mustn't forget, as David Helwig noted yesterday, the sheer quantity of production which is required to fill thirteen channels with sixteen hours of programming a day. It has to be pulp and formula - there's just too much air time to fill.

I'd like to describe to you how a typical TV drama episode, in this case an episode of 'Mannix', is written. I think

it's very revealing.

I was in a writer's office in Los Angeles a couple of weeks ago when the phone rang. It was the story editor of 'Mannix' and the dialogue with my writer friend went as follows: "You need an episode of 'Mannix' right away. What subject? A water subject. Underwater? Oh, you had an underwater episode two weeks ago. On the surface then? Okay to be shot in the marina at Marina Delray. When do you want it by? (This was a Monday) - Wednesday, OK, no sweat." He hung up and crossed to his filing cabinets, of which he had many, and pulled out the 'Mannix' fact sheet. The fact sheet gives a breakdown of the character, explaining what is allowed and not allowed in terms of both the character and the star. Mannix will never be seen without a shirt or with his hair mussed. Mannix will never be seen drunk, Mannix is chivalrous with ladies and austere with tarts and homosexuals, etc..etc...

He pinned up the set of rules on a large bulletin board, he went back to the filing cabinet headed A to Z, containing different openings. He went through, riffled down through the cards, down to W for water. My mind boggled when I noticed that the card before 'water' was 'wasps'. He had four different coards of 'Water Hookers', as they are called - those thirty-second grabbers at the beginning of the show. Next

came a three-and-a-half minutes segment called 'The Problem' in which client meets Mannix and tells him she is in desperate trouble: she's been made pregnant by an elephant etc. Commercial break. Next comes a seven-minute segment: Joe Mannix goes out looking for the elephant, finishing with suspense action leaving the hero in jeopardy. Next came a four-minute segment, then another seven-minute segment, all with their appriopriate names, and finally there was a seven-minute 'Home Stretch', with a two-minute thing called 'The Diver', a twist that puts the hero in sudden trouble. The diver is necessary because it is feared that during the home stretch, which is usually conventional, the audience will switch channels. At the end of the home stretch, there was another commercial break, the one-minute wrap-up, another commercial break and then, finally, the thirty-second teaser for next week. My writer friend just kept pulling out filing cards appropriate for the various segments. He shuffled them about and pinned them up on the board. He finished an hour script in a day and a half and delivered it on Wednesday. He told me there are so many commercial breaks in a typical show that the only way to hold up the whole tottering structure is through continual jolts of violence. Constant impact is looked for. He told me he knwos two writers who work together: one starts at the beginning, one at the end and they meet in the middle.

One sees that the prevalence of violence in these series is because there is no other way they can be written. Subtlety of theme and character, which are the ordinary tools of a writer, are not required and, in any case, they're quite beyond any person working on the series. It's not necessary ot attack these shows. As Ezra Pound said, "It's meat for the house dog". ThereKs no use criticizing a chocolate bar for not providing illumination. It was not meant to. There is always going to be a lot of filler on television; it's an inevitable part of the whole medium.

I personally subscribe to the BBC philosophy: the aim of television shoudl be to inform, to educate, to entertain. I feel it is entirely possible to have a popular, commercial, dramatic television series without debasing it the way American television has. There is an area where the good and the popular overlap and this is what responsible people working in television should always be aiming for. It's not easy. It's much easier to go in for the machine-made product. It takes effort, imagination, persistence, but it can be done. I've always directed in a commercial context, both my films and my television work, and that has always been my approach: to do interesting plays that have some validity, significance, some comment on the human experience, but are still capable of attracting a large audience. This is Sidney Newman's philosophy and he proved it could work

by producing what is still, in my experience, the best and most successful commercial anthology television drama series ever done: 'Armchair Theatre' in England. He was not against giving people what they want, which is the usual defence for most of the programming on television, but he also felt a responsibility to extend the frontiers of pupular taste. His crowning success, I suppose, was to produce an original Harold Pinter play for television which came third in the top ten in the ratings.

Well, enough of the philosophy. What concrete things can be done to improve the quality of popular television drama in Canada? I can tell you in onw word: money. There are few problems money won't solve and getting a good drama series is not one of them. You need money to develop good scripts, the source from which all virtues flow, and you need money to produce them properly. There's no magic solution to improving popular entertainment. If what follows seems to demonstrate a firm grasp of the obvious, I hope you'll excuse me. Sometimes it's necessary to go back to basics.

First of all, I think it's imperative that we have a series on Canadian television that does only original Canadian television plays fifty-two weeks of the year. To do this, you need money to commission plays freely. You can't wait around for masterpieces to arrive through the mailbox. You must

create a situation that allows talent, if it exists, to reveal itself. When I first went to England, I worked as a director on 'Armchair Theatre' before Sidney Newman arrived. We were doing tired old stage plays and already-produced American television plays. When Sidney Newman became producer of 'Armchair Theatre', he passed an absolute law--no stage plays and no American television plays. This was done for three reasons. Firstly, plays written specifically for the medium always work better. Secondly, and more important, television had a role to play in society: to reveal what was going on, to delve into the changes that were occuring, to interpret what was happening around the audience he was broadcasting to. Thirdlay, like Ezra Pound, he wanted to make it new. It's more fun. All the directors went along with it at first, but there were no decent writers. The scripts were terrible, we got bad reviews, he got worse. Finally, the four or five directors that were involved in 'Armchair Theatre', went to him in a mutinous mood. We told him this was just a disastrous policy, but he was adamant. He persisted, all the time commissioning, taking chances, throwing away the worst plays - that's where the money comes in - and only making us do the next but worst. Well, suddenly, out of the woodwork came Harold Pinter, Alun Owen, Angus Wilson, John Mortimer and a host of other extraordinary original talents. He made them work with a wide audience, with his insistence on clarity, and good story-telling. He was a popularizer and

urged the use of all the showmanship tricks to make the plays work. It was obligatory to amuse, to intrigue, to move, to grip, to engross, the dazzle, to surprise, to mystify, to illuminate, to entertain in the complete sense of the word. I often feel sometimes watching certain plays done on the CBC that they've abandoned this. They think good story-telling is something to be embarrassed about. I feel strongly that we must try the same things here in Canada. No one can predict the results, but we will never know unless we provide an opportunity for the budding playwrights in this country to raise their voices.

We must do fifty-two original plays a year to create some kind of continuity, so that one can learn from failures and build on success. It will also provide a living for directors and actors. The way it is now, I see talented directors languishing and talented actors are obliged to turn to something else in order to survive. I recently directed a play for the CBC and in it, giving a splendid performance, was a man you all know - Mavor Moore. He told me he had not been offered an acting job for five years. We.. that's a disgrace, and the whole of the CBC should be ashamed of themselves. Unless you have a body of functioning actors out working all the time, you cannot have good popular drama, or drama of any kind.

Canada needs such a drama series to provide us with a picture of ourselves in this incredibly variegated country in which we live. We are a fragmented country with still rather weak national and social cohesiveness. We are a country that knows nothing about itself and our experiences in Canada are incredibly different.

I've just read an extraordinary film script by a Dukabor girl. I'm working on 'Lark in the Clear Air', a hilarious picture of Irish Canadians you'd never have imagined existed in Ontario. I'm considering another book for a film, Halfbreed, dealing with the exotic Metis in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. I've just read John and the Missus by Gordon Pincent, dealing with the exotic Irish coal miners in Newfoundland, and if I told you about my upbringing in a Bulgarian village in the middle of Toronto, you wouldn't believe me. All these experiences, it seems to me, are highly communicable in dramatic form. Drama provides us with an ideal opportunity to examine what we share with one another, to try and delineate the Canadian experience - where we've been, what we are, and perhaps where we should be going. No one will need worry about the Canadian identity or differentiating ourselves from the U.S. It will be Canadian, made by Canadians for Canadians about Canada and I think that what is distinctive about us will emerge. And we

are distinctive, make no mistake about it.

Secondly, why isn't there always on Canadian television a multi-part serialization of a Canadian novel and/or a treatment of one of our Canadian heroes? 'Jalna' was done. It wasn't the success they wanted it to be so the CBC quit. 'The National Dream' was a success but why aren't we building on it? Why wasn't Duddy Kravitz serialized years ago? And what about Richler's Son of a Smaller Hero or The Street? What about Gabrielle Roi's Where Nest's the Water Hen? What about Rudy Weeb's Temptations of Big Bear? It would make a fantastic series. What about the aforementioned Halfbreed by Maria Campbell, or Barometer Rising by Hugh McLennan, set against the Halifax explosion, or The Luck of Ginger Coffee? What about a series of dramatized short stories - Sinclair Ross' Lamp at Midnight, Morley Callahan's extraordinary collection of short stories? What about Alice Munroe's Lives of Girls and Women, anything by W.O. Mitchell, the novels of Robertson Davies, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Lawrence? What about a series about the Acadian Heroine, Evangeline? What about Papineau, Madeleine de Vercher, Dollard des Ormeaux? These are just a few of the things that I'd like to direct.

Thirdly, let's develop some good comedy series. I dislike humourless people, and I dislike humourless art. If you want

a healthy counterpart to all that violence, do comedy. Canadians often say that we have no sense of humour and that we have no talent for comedy. Rubbish! A lot of the best comedy being done in Los Angeles is being written by Canadians. In fact, at one point, it was estimated that about 40% of U.S. comedy series were being written by Canadians.

Finally, I thin we need an 'Omnibus' type program. 'Omnibus' is a kind of high-brow program in England that goes on every Sunday night. In Canada, we should be working in an English-language tradition and a French-language tradition. We need a drama series where we do the best foreign plays, plays from the classical repertory, the unusual, the experimental and the difficult--all the way from Plato's Symposium to the latest hit in London, New York or Paris. I think it's important in our feverish pursuit of identity that we not get parochial.

When I first started working for the CBC in 1952, everything I just outlined to you was happening. We had 'General Motors Theatre' doing original Canadian hour plays. We had 'On Camera' performing original half-hour plays. There were hour and a half specials for government savings bonds, featuring original Canadian plays. There was a science-fiction series called 'Space Command', directed by the present

head of CTV, Murray Cherkover. There was a classic Canadian series - an adaptation of Stephen Leacock's Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town. There was the childrens' adventure series - 'Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea', 'Treasure Island' and others, and then there was my old-time favourite - 'The Plouffe Family' series. And they had a great idea. First they did it in French, and then either that night, or the next day, they did it in English. I think it's a marvelous idea. Why hasn't there been more of that kind of bilingual production from Montreal?

Going back even further, we have the glories of CBC radio that made us famous all over the world - that wonderful stage series produced by Andrew Allan on Sunday night to which I, and so many others, owe a tremendous amount. The 'Stage' series did exactly what I'm talking about: original Canadian plays by Lister Sinclair, Len Peterson, and many others; adaptations of Canadian books like Two Solitudes by Hugh McLennan; as well as the classics and new writing abroad.

There was this tradition and it was carried over into the early days of CBC television and then abandoned. Well, it has to be revived. I think there are people who want to. John Hirsch, Head of CBC Drama, subscribes to a lot of what

I've said and is even now working to implement it. In commercial television, I know that Murray Cherkover has just commissioned the adaptation of Max Braithwaite's Why Shoot the Teacher? and a script about a famous western character, John Ware, both for future production. And these are encouraging beginnings. Let's give it our total support. You know, we sit around here worrying about violence on television drama when the problem really is that there is no Canadian television drama for violence to be in. Canada has the energy, the talent, the confidence and the wealth to do it - so let's do it.

CANADIAN INDUSTRY REALITIES - CAN WE DO WITHOUT VIOLENCE?

Ken Sobol has combined successful careers as a film writer, author, television critic and journalist. Mr. Sobol who received his Master's Degree in English Literature and Drama from Columbia University, is author of Babe Ruth and the American Dream. He has been story head at Filmation of Hollywood, television critic for the Village Voice in New York, and has written a variety of material for educational television, including the Emmy-winning program, 'Inside Out'.

Following Ted Kotcheff is a hard act, especially since I am probably the only Hollywood hack in the place, and one of those people that he condemns so strongly. I'd be the last person to argue with him in that sense. But there is one point about it that perhaps should be made. It allowed me and many other writers a chance to learn, and that's probably the thing that's most lacking in Canadian television. If you're going to write, if you're going to practice writing, if you're going to learn, you don't learn on 'Philco Playhouse' or 'Performance', or something like that. You need places to be bad, and certainly Hollywood supplies those. The problem comes, of course, after you've been bad, learned really how to be bad very well. Most writers in Hollywood are, by that time, locked into the economic structure with their swimming pools and the rest of it, so they continue doing it for the rest of their lives. However, it is terribly

important to have some place to practice, to learn how, and that's drastically lacking in Canada.

The main subject that I'm supposed to deal with is children's television. It's what I've had most of my experience in, so I'll devote all my time to a brief analysis of the relationship of violence, whatever that is, to such programming.

I should explain that when I talk about children's programming today, I'm excluding shows intended for pre-school audiences. For one thing, I think far too much emphasis is put upon that area to the detriment of programming for the much larger and more receptive six-to-fourteen age group. For another, not even the American Broadcasting Company at its most bloodthirsty ever dared to present a really violent nursery school show--altough I've no doubt it was contemplated at one time or another. And so, 'Sesame Street', 'Captain Kangaroo', 'Romper Room', and so on, are pretty well outside the scope of this panel.

For the purpose of this Symposium, children's television can be divided into three categories. The categories are: shows originating on commercial American networks; shows originating or distributed by PBS; and shows produced by and for Canadians. The last category unfortunately barely

exists, at least in terms of general entertainment programming. In my opinion, that represents probably the worst of all the failures of Canadian television and I'll come back to that later.

On the American commercial networks, children's programming basically means Saturday-morning programming. In the 1966-67 season, Fred Silverman cashed in on the income potential of defenceless children. Saturday morning's peak hours, ten to twelve, can deliver as many as 13,000,000 viewers, virtually all between the ages of three and fourteen. At the outset, when the time period was entirely unregulated, as many as eight commercial minutes were shoe-horned into each half-hour, a figure equal to 40% of actual program time. Earnings for that time slot were, and still are, enormous, accounting for outlandish percentages of total network profits. Not surprisingly, competition between the networks quickly became every bit as cut-throat as in the evening. Also not surprisingly, the modern Saturday-morning era was founded on action-adventure cartoons. Given the budgetary and production structure of Saturday morning--a fixed, very low budget, a huge number of self-contained segments to be delivered in a limited time, and the pre-set number of network reruns before syndication--the only production alternative was to produce to a highly structured formula. The studios had to

cut down drastically on actual animation, substituting camera tricks, sound effects and greatly increased amounts of dialogue, simplifying background standardizing layouts, and concentrating on building up a large library of stock shots that could be used again and again and again in a series. It soon became apparent that action adventure with human or humanoid characters lent itself far more easily to this kind of limited animation than the traditional cartoon comedy. To put it very simply, a visual gag takes a great deal more effort and expense to make work than a face stuck onto a fist followed by a frame-filling splat. Add to the obvious production of action adventure the appetite for mayhem of the average child, not to mention that of the average network executive, and this happy meeting of production necessity and sales dynamite soon turns Saturday morning into the talking equivalent of the comic book rack in your local cigar store. This is essentially the same point that Ted Kotcheff was making about the crime shows. It is built into the production process. There's no way you can write these shows without eventually resorting to violence in one form or another.

In the first years the super-hero cartoons were often genuinely vicious. Shows such as 'Spiderman', 'Dynoboy and the Fantastic Hulk' were ugly to the point of the grotesque. Even the less extreme series--'Superman', 'Batman'--had a staggering high bruise quotient, with each new falling body

being resoundingly cheered by the networks. When the inevitable troubled parents and concerned Congressmen reaction occurred in the late Sixties, a great many interdictions, still theoretically in force today, were handed down by the networks. There were to be no guns, no blood, no triple-fang snakes, no giant spiders, no mad dwarfs, no poison fishhooks--and that was on just one show. While that eliminated much of the overt violence, the "bad guys doing something nasty to the good guys" formula remained untouched, and is still the essence of Saturday-morning action adventure.

In a recent Saturday's episode of 'Valley of the Dinosaurs', for example, two kids spend the entire show under attack by various prehistoric monsters. In the same hour on 'These are the Days', a nostalgic cartoon ripping off 'The Waltons', the story revolved around whether or not the hero would get beaten up by the school bully. And a dozen similar examples are available every weekend. Even the comedy cartoons, 'Archie', 'Scooby-Do', 'The Flintstones', and so on, which were introduced to counter public criticism of the super heros, are based on the same aggression-retaliation formula, although theoretically in humorous form. Reggie pushes Jughead off a dock, somebody steals Scooby-Do's favourite collar, and so on. Some, in fact, such as the 'Pink Panther', which began only twelve years ago as a highly

abstract and stylized theatrical cartoon, now contain enough beating up and bone-breaking to make the Fantastic Hulk himself, or itself, think about a quieter line of work. I don't think that any individual cartoon of this kind has any effect. But the cumulative effect of three or four hours of this might be quite different.

In all, the program breakdown isn't very different on Saturday morning prime time today than it was in 1966. From ten to twelve there are four and a half hours of action adventure, one and a half hours of comedy. So, despite the cosmetic news and learning inserts, and the enforced decrease in commercial minutes, the answer to the question "Can we do without violence?" would seem to be, "No". It is built into the production process and into the competitive structure as well.

Turning very briefly to the American non-commercial kid shows, I want to make one quite different point. In the notes I received in preparing for this panel, the question is asked: "Why does television spend so little effort trying to deal factually or imaginatively with the issues that concern a society?". Assuming that is a proper goal for children's programming, the American show that has succeeded best in meeting it has been 'Inside Out', which won the Emmy a couple of years ago as the best children's series. It's a series

dealing with what the school psychologists are pleased to call "life-coping skills" for average eight-to-twelve year olds. Part of it was produced by OECA here, the rest in the United States.

The American portions of the series, which was considered the most realistic show in years, were saturated with violence and violent situations. At the initial production meetings, the OECA group was offered its choice of the battered child, the violent divorce, the bully situation, death, and the embittered father, to mention only a few topics. In our Canadian way we eventually selected such themes as "What is Help and Responsibility", but what impressed the native-born Canadians was the almost obsessive concern with the more violent and antagonistic elements of life. What I'm getting at is that the reality of an American child's life is not the same as the reality of a Canadian child's. Violence and violent response is an intrinsic part of American life, of the American imagination and deeply felt mythic ways, that are quite foreign to Canadians. One of the great dangers for Canadian television in general is taking American psychological reality as a model for Canadian reality and trying to build programs around it, instead of programs that are indigenous to the Canadian context. Aggression is only one aspect of American life, of course, and in fact some of the PBS shows, particularly 'Zoom', have taken fresh and imaginative approaches.

But by and large, American television has failed to come up with anything very valuable for children over the age of five, and even most of the non-commercial programmings seem manipulative and unaffectionate. That brings me to the Canadian efforts, and I must say I'm talking only about English Canadian shows.

Last autumn two major general-entertainment shows aimed specifically at primary-aged children were introduced. OECA's 'Monkey Bars' and CBC's 'Doctor Zonk and the Zonkins'. Both were failures, the former an honourable dog, the latter a bizarre catastrophe. And together they perfectly illustrate the point I've been attempting to make. Both shows were based on that same aggression-retaliation, "somebody out to get somebody else, bad adults versus good kids" format that has been the staple of Saturday morning. My guess is that the producers spent too much time trying to be bigtime, looking at the American Saturday morning competition until they began to compete with it on its own terms. And of course they lost. In the case of 'Doctor Zonk', the producer set out openly to imitate a commercial American format. At the initial organizing session, to which I was invited, one of the show's bosses announced that they wanted "a combination of 'The Monkeys', 'Laugh-In', and 'Banana Splits'", a statement that not only blew my mind, but blew my person out the door as well, never to return. What they eventually got was what a Toronto critic

called the worst show he had ever seen.

My basic point in this brief and very broadly-drawn presentation is that if you imitate the predominant American forms, you get American content. And that usually involves violent responses, generational conflicts and aggression of one form or another. They're intrinsic to most commercial programming in the U.S. and far from absent from the non-commercial shows. If there is to be any respectable children's programming in English Canada, it must ignore most of the inherited formulae and start over from scratch, beginning with that crucial ingredient so pathetically lacking in most American shows--a genuine affection for children and interest in their lives. One final point. OECA may have failed, but at least it set out to counteract the American networks in a time period when it really matters, on Saturday morning. The CTV network is also belatedly giving it a try this coming season. I must say, I find it astonishing that the CBC, in a time period which has by far the greatest concentration of children all week, devotes itself entirely to showing aged reruns of American cartoons and movies. But then, being only a landed immigrant, I probably don't fully comprehend the significance of 'Tarzan' and 'The Flintstones' to the Canadian national character.

Les Brown is currently the television correspondent for the New York Times. Mr. Brown spent a total of 20 years covering the broadcast media for Variety magazine, and occupied the position of radio and television editor there from 1965 to 1973. He has authored two books, Television: the Business Behind the Box, and Electronic Media, a high school primer. Mr. Brown is a member of the editorial board for Television Quarterly, and is a member of the T.V. Film Advisory Committee for the New York State Council on the Arts.

The familiar metaphors for violence on television are medical and culinary. We have heard violence spoken of as a disease, as if it were a virus for which there may be a cure. Senator Pastori, who likes 'The F.B.I.', one of the most consistently violent shows on television, seems to think of violence as a flavouring, an essence, or a seasoning that can be increased or reduced in TV entertainment according to the standards adopted by the industry at the behest of government. I reject both metaphors for failing properly to identify the problem. As a journalist who has covered TV in the U.S. for about twenty-two years, I suggest a military analogy. The three TV networks are perpetually at war. Their programming councils closely resemble military strategy sessions. Each new television season is a campaign, each time period of the day a battlefield. Programs are the weaponry--violence is heavy ammunition, brutality is dynamite. The struggle is over the approximately $2,500,000,000

that advertisers are inclined to spend in network television every year. Each network's share of that gorgeous pie is largely determined by its share of the viewing audience. Any network that might, out of conscience, eliminate violence from its arsenal, runs the danger of having its head blown off.

NBC made a move in 1973 to clean up its Saturday morning children's block, substituting a few live-action entertainment shows for some of its violence-oriented cartoons. It got clobbered by the rival networks and ran third in one of television's most profitable program areas. Things improved for NBC when the other networks, under government pressure, also adopted tamer forms of programs.

In U.S. television, a program is scheduled with a mind to harming the shows that are in competition with it. This is called counter programming. Of all the arts and entertainment media, television alone seeks to kill its own. On Broadway a few smash hits enliven the whole theatre scene. A hot nightclub act can be a boon to cabaret business generally. When there are two or three big box-office movies in circulation, they help even the lesser movies to sell tickets. But when there is a red-hot TV show, it usually demolishes two others in opposition.

This season CBS presented a two-hour preview of a new dramatic series, 'Beacon Hill', which, as you know, is inspired by 'Upstairs, Downstairs'. CBS presented it ahead of the new season in hopes of winning an audience for it against the relatively easy competition of summer reruns. ABC met the strategy by pitting against it the rerun of a fairly successful TV movie, 'The Legend of Lizzie Borden'. 'Beacon Hill' is essentially a character drama. Some might call it a classy soap opera. It is in any event a program that will do great credit to the medium, if it survives. 'Lizzie Borden' is basically an exploitation film on the legendary case of a woman accused of axe-murdering her parents. ABC's intention with 'Lizzie' was clearly to bludgeon 'Beacon Hill', to keep it from winning friends out of season. There is nothing disreputable about the tactic. It is how the game is played or, in faithfulness to the metaphor, how the war is fought. Possibly the violence that we see on the tube takes its inspiration from the implied violence in the television system itself.

Contrary to what many who have spoken here suppose, violence does not proliferate on television because it sells better than other shows, or because it is the most popular of entertainment genres. Violence is on the increase because it is less likely to fail than other program types that lend themselves to formula treatment. The most popular prime

time shows last year, those that dominated the Neilson Top Ten, were situation comedies. The police/private-eye/ adventure shows tended to collect at the second level of popularity, positions eleven to thirty on the Neilson chart. Since that is the case, you might reasonably wonder why the networks have not overwhelmingly gone for comedy. The reason is that comedy is more difficult to bring off, and has a higher failure rate than action adventure. Let me explain here that television programs do not generate audience. Very rarely does a television program draw audience to the set and the networks know this from 25 years of experience. People watch television and not programs. First they decide to watch television, then they decide what they will watch. We know this from the fact that viewing levels, no matter what programs are cancelled one year and new programs brought in, remain approximately the same from year to year. They increase as the population increases. At seven thirty at night, which is the beginning of prime time, there are approximately 75,000,000 people before the set in the U.S. At nine o'clock, which is the peak of prime time, the number of viewers grows to about 90,000,000 and sometimes 100,000,000 people. And then it begins to decline after that. The age demographics, of course, become favourable after nine o'clock because presumably the young and the old go to bed. So what you have after nine o'clock are

young adults, which is the audience to look for. In order to get a bigger audience for the show, you have to take it away from another network because the audience is going to be the same. This is how the programs compete.

Failure is a catastrophe in American commercial television. When ratings fall, the price of the corporation stock also drops, and heads roll. Last September, CBS and NBC got off to fast starts in the new season, leaving ABC far behind. The ABC loss of position was reflected in a decrease in profits for the company in the fourth quarter. By November, the president over television was replaced by another executive within the company, one skilled in program strategy. In short order the new president brought in a raft of new shows, most of them oriented to violence. The move was successful. ABC gained ground and the corporate powers were vindicated in their choice of Frederick Pierce as president.

Fred Pierce is a good and decent man. I know him well. He's a family man. He has displayed a profound understanding of the mass television audience in his previous posts with the network. He did what was right for the company, giving stockholders the assurance that ABC was on the move again. Meanwhile, "SWAT' and 'Baretta' have joined the array of violent shows as full-fledged hits. 'SWAT', one of

several that Pierce brought in, bids fair to steal the honours from 'Kojak' as the most violent show on television. Speaking of 'Kojak', why has CBS scheduled it on Sunday night, traditionally the family night in American television? From nine to eleven P.M., CBS have to cope with a strong ABC movie and the NBC Mystery Movie where 'Columbo', 'McLeod', 'McMillan and Wife', and the new entry with Tony Curtis, 'McCoy', rotate. Viewing is heaviest on Sunday nights. Premium advertising is at stake. It is no time to default. Therefore, 'Kojak'.

Movies have played the key role in the escalation of violence on television. Early in the Sixties, when television was murdering the movie business, NBC began to buy movies for prime time. By 1965, movies were program staple for all the networks. Within the next two years, each network had two or even three movies on its schedule each week. The movies were important to the network because they were drawing into the theatres the very audience that television wanted most to reach, persons 18 to 49, or even more preferably, 18 to 35. At the same time, in order to survive against television, theatrical movies became more sexually explicit and more violent than ever. During the late 1960's, the movies on network television wrecked devastation on the orthodox TV programs slotted against them. The Hollywood studios which produced shows

for television asked the networks for a new set of standards that would enable them to compete effectively with movies. Standards at the networks were relaxed and last year movies were not the potent fare they used to be on television. A network president explained that we've learned how to make TV shows that can compete with movies, meaning shows that are more sexually explicit, more violent.

I'm not a social scientist and I have never conducted any expensive formal research, but I don't know how any thinking person in this room can doubt for a minute that a medium which boasts of being able to sell anything--products, service or candidates--would not also be effective in selling anti-social attitudes or violent behaviour. Doctor Joseph Clapper of CBS recently conducted some research on two children's series that were designed to promote pro-social values. They were 'Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids' and 'The Harlem Globetrotters Popcorn Machine'. His data showed that the two programs were very successful in achieving their positive objectives, promoting pro-social values. It seemed to me then that he also proved that programs that did not promote pro-social values but were dealing in anti-social values were selling those,too.

As a critic, as a parent and as a member of the human race,

I deeply resent being cannon fodder in a war between corporations for a multi-billion dollar prize. On strictly anecdotal evidence and gut feeling, I consider television's preoccupation with aggression, violence and brutality to be harmful to the society I live in. On the other hand, I oppose intervention by the government, not just for First Amendment reasons, but because from what I have seen in my years at this work, it is usually clumsy, politically expendient, and, in the end, only cosmetic. We now have a family-viewing period which I expect will be short-lived. They've cleaned up violence from eight to nine. However, as soon as one network gets in trouble it will reach for the old panacea, and then they'll all be back at it.

A few years ago there was a big crackdown on violence. The Pastori Committee created a climate in which the heat was on and the networks knew they had to do something to deal with the problem. So they found a new kind of violence. It was automobile violence. For a whole year we saw car crashes and screeching of brakes and all kinds of things that happen to the car, with which we all identify.

What do we do about all this? I submit that there is a mechanism for dealing with irresponsible broadcasting which is the heart and soul of the American Communications Act of 1934. I presume there is something comparable in your

Canadian laws. American laws hold that a television licensee must serve the public interest, convenience and necessity. That sounds good, but the phrase is hard to define and so no station in the United States has ever lost its licence precisely for failing to serve the public interest. But if you went down the program schedule of any station in America--the program schedule of a station being made up of what it carries off the network and what it buys from syndication or produces itself--I think you would find that in almost every vital period of the day the broadcaster was serving his own economic interest ahead of the public interest.

Only one licence in America need be taken away for disservice to the public through overindulgence in violent programming and the system would be reformed overnight.

Ralph Ellis, president of Ralph C. Ellis Enterprises Limited, has had an extensive experience in television and film production. Mr. Ellis' film career began in 1946 when he joined the National Film Board in Halifax. Eight years later, Mr. Ellis launched a private film distribution company, Freemantle of Canada Limited. Since then he has helped develop several production companies, including Keg Productions and Manitou Productions. Mr. Ellis is a motion picture pioneer, has been executive producer of several successful television series, including 'Adventures in Rainbow Country', 'Audubon Wildlife', and the series of specials, 'The Wild Country'.

We have found an interesting thing in terms of the subject of this Symposium. We have found that the audience for nature films, which is primarily a family audience, reacts very badly to sequences in which animals are shot. We have certain scientific evidence to back this up. For instance, the CBC has a very special rating service which measures not just the number of people who are watching a given program, but how much they are actually enjoying what they are seeing. I remember one episode of 'Audubon Wildlife Theatre' in which we had an elk herd in the western part of the United States who had exceeded their forage area. There were no predators to keep them in line, there were too many of them, so the herd had to be culled. We showed a sequence about an elk being shot, and when we got the enjoyment index on that particular show, whereas we normally were rated in the high eighties, this episode was substantially less.

I'm here today to speak specifically and give you my views as president of Keg Productions and also Ralph C. Ellis Enterprises. I can't say that I represent the Canadian private production industry specifically, although I believe that they would second the suggestions that I'm going to make here this morning.

Before getting into the larger question of producing

Canadian television programs without violence, let's look at some of the economic factors in production and distribution of Canadian programs. In examining the production and distribution of programs for television, the first factor to consider is that of budgeting and marketing. The world television market is made up of the United States which represents approximately 50% of the income possible to the producer. The balance of the world represents the other 50%. This latter half of the world market obviously is the most costly sector in which to sell programs, due to the many language requirements, distances to be covered, etc. Because the United States can produce television programs and recover their cost in their own country, they have become dominant in the world of television production and distribution, and their sale of TV series abroad is really, and I hope this is not too harsh a term, a form of dumping. They attempt to get the highest price possible. But, if they get $4,000 per half-hour program out of English Canada, and $2,000 out of French Canada, these sums, while small in relation to the original cost of the program, represent clear profit. Canada represents substantially less than ten percent of the world television market, but the cost to produce a television program here is somewhat less than in the United States. However, on a profit and loss basis, no network or advertiser could justify the cost of producing a full series of television shows for the

Canadian market only. Canadian networks such as the CBC regularly produce very costly programs as part of their mandate. This, however, is not possible for unsubsidized companies in the private enterprise sector of Canada.

The cost of producing a half-hour dramatic series in Canada in English or French ranges upwards from a minimum of $2,000 a minute. A thirty-minute show would cost approximately $60,000. Many dramatic programs exceed this cost, but few could be completed for less. This makes an investment of approximately $1,500,000 for a dramatic film program of 26 half-hours which, when repeated once, makes a 52 week schedule. The cost of dubbing a series into English or French would be approximately $2,000 per half-hour. These costs are approximate, depending on the number of characters required. It might be more, but certainly wouldn't be much less. Costs for hour programs are roughly double the cost of a half-hour, so your dubbing costs for an hour dramatic show would be in the area of $4,000. Other programs of a documentary character, such as wildlife programs, travel shows, etc., cost much less to produce and, in some cases, can be fully-paid for in the Canadian television market. It is obvious, therefore, that for private production companies the only way to recover the cost of a series is through sales in Canada and the world television market. Over the years, a number of Canadian series of a dramatic and

non-dramatic character produced by the private enterprise sector have been sold widely around the world. Some examples are 'R.C.M.P.', 'Forest Rangers', 'Adventures in Rainbow Country', 'Audubon Wildlife Theatre', 'Untamed World', 'Robinson Crusoe', and 'Witness to Yesterday'. Virtually all of these were also available as dubbed series in French Canada. Also, virtually all of these were only possible through the support and sometimes co-production arrangements with a Canadian television network.

The limiting factor to the stimulation of an active private program production industry outside of existing networks and stations is the lack of cooperation between private producers and television networks. Although series have been produced in the past through such cooperation, it is difficult for TV networks and stations to allocate funds for any consistent flow of production without a related cutback in their own operations. In dramatic series production, it usually takes co-production arrangements between two or more countries to cover the cost of a series of programs. It is understandable that networks and major TV stations are reluctant at times to gamble on a high-risk, expensive dramatic film series when the same money invested in a videotape series of another sort, using their own facilities, is usually more immediately profitable.

One way out of the problem could be the provision of a special government subsidy for production of dramatic TV series. That is, two dollars from government, one dollar from the network, and one dollar from the private producer. We'd be talking about a 50% subsidy from a government source. Using Canadian talent and private production companies as a condition of the subsidy, such a plan could assist in the development of a healthy Canadian production industry producing programs on both film and videotape. This would also allow a basic supply of programming free from the excessive violence being questioned at this Symposium. Without a subsidy of the kind just mentioned, there is little hope for private producers and networks to make other than what will sell in the United States--dramatic series with an equivalent amount of conflict and violence to their own.

As a first priority in the area of children's programming, Canada could take the lead in special non-violent films for television. It has already shown that film series produced in Canada with a non-violent approach are very popular here and abroad. As an example, 'Adventurrs in Rainbow Country', which was number one in its time period on CBC when it was originally played, is now sold in 40 countries and in six languages. For example, the German-dubbed version run at seven o'clock on a Tuesday evening,

had in excess of 18,000,000 viewers, which is very high for that territory. 'Rainbow Country' was designed to be non-violent, was produced as a co-production with the CBC and with other partners. It was done, incidentally, under the rules and regulations which CBC have and we did not feel they were a problem when we were producing the show. The show was designed to be non-violent, but at the same time engaging to the viewer.

We could perhaps emulate the success of the films produced in England under the auspices of the Children's Film Foundation. The Children's Film Foundation is a non-profit film industry subsidized group which, after much research, has commissioned many one-hour children's feature films each year for theatrical and for television use. The approach in each Children's Film Foundation production is a script which has excitement, action, tension, but a clearcut delineation of the heros and the villains, and a lack of violence. Films are very popular with the audience for which they are intended, and this type of film would be a natural to produce in Canada. We have excellent locations for such exciting adventure films from coast to coast. Since these films could be shown in theatres as well as on TV, any effort in this direction could be a joint project of private producers with networks or stations with the Canadian Film Development

Corporation offering assistance on the same basis which I mentioned before.

The investment of money in fostering Canadian production should be assisted as much as possible by promotion of sales in countries other than the United States. In this connection, an excellent market exists in the United Kingdom for Canadian programs which, by the way, today still remain available to stations and networks and qualify as 100% British content. It is my opinion that an even greater market would open if some Canadian content consideration were to be given British television programs and films in Canada. This used to be the case, but preferential treatment was dropped when new Canadian regulations were adopted a few years ago.

To summarize, we can produce television programs in Canada without excessive violence. We can only accomplish this if we are not totally dependent on the United States market and are receiving some sort of government subsidy. We could set an example for the world if we really feel Canada should spend money on its cultural development in English and French television programming of a non-violent but perfectly acceptable character.

Depuis leur début, les réseaux de télévision de langue française ont su produire des émissions qui ont obtenu un immense succès auprès des téléspectateurs francophones. De ce fait, et contrairement aux réseaux canadiens-anglais, ils ont pu se dégager de l'influence et de la dépendance des émissions américaines. On a donc jugé bon de demander à M. Raymond David, vice-président et directeur général de la radiodiffusion française de la Société Radio-Canada, de bien vouloir s'adresser aux participants. M. David a tenté de cerner les principales raisons qui sont à la base de la vitalité, de la diversité et des succès de la programmation française. Il a aussi soulevé les problèmes auxquels la télévision francophone doit faire face. L'allocution de M. David, présentée sans texte préparé à l'avance, visait aussi à informer les participants des réalisations de la télévision canadienne française. Les connaissances de ces derniers variant selon les individus, la présentation a tenté de toucher à tous les aspects de la programmation.

Le Canada français est à bien des égards fort différent du Canada anglais, tout comme il l'est des Etats-Unis. Par conséquent, notre grille horaire présente un aspect fort différent de celle des stations canadiennes anglaises et des stations américaines.

Lorsque la télévision canadienne a vu le jour en 1952, la Société Radio-Canada avait décidé de créer, à Montréal, une station bilingue. Cette formule ne fut retenue que pour quelque six mois sous la pression des vives protestations qui s'élevèrent des deux communautés linguistiques. La Société a alors décidé de mettre en place deux stations à Montréal:

CBFT et CBMT. Mais, de ce fait, nous nous sommes retrouvés dans une impasse car nous ne pouvions nous alimenter nulle part en émissions. Il fallait tout produire. A cette époque, les télévisions francophones d'Europe en étaient tout comme nous à leurs premiers pas.

L'industrie du doublage n'existait pas encore, le besoin ne s'étant pas jusqu'alors manifesté. Par conséquent, il a fallu tout créer nous-mêmes. Ainsi, pour vous citer un exemple: la télévision française de Radio-Canada devait allouer 25% de son budget pour présenter 23 heures d'émissions jeunesse conçues électroniquement. De la même façon, il fallut se lancer dans la production et la réalisation d'émissions de divertissement. C'est ainsi que naquirent les téléromans. Heureusement, dès le début, nous avons pu compter sur des écrivains qui, tout en étant populaires, produisaient des oeuvres de grande qualité. Je pense à Roger Lemelin pour "Les Plouffe", à Madame Guévremont pour "Le Survenant", à Guy Dufresne pour "Cap-aux-Sorciers", à André Giroux pour "14, rue de Galais". Nous avons donc débuté avec huit séries hebdomadaires de téléromans et cette tradition s'est toujours maintenue avec des succès inégaux. Il faut toutefois avouer que dans toute entreprise de ce genre on se lance dans l'aléatoire; ce que nous croyons bon à priori peut parfois ne pas l'être. Cependant, nous pouvons dire que, dans l'ensemble, les téléromans ont formé la charnière de notre programmation. Nous avons d'abord misé sur la popularité. Le mot d'ordre de Radio-Canada a été de "faire une télévision populaire".

D'ailleurs, le gros de notre budget a été attribué aux téléromans, ainsi qu'aux émissions de variétés. A cette époque, la chaîne française de Radio-Canada opposait à "Ed Sullivan", l'émission "Music Hall" alors animée par Michelle Tisseyre. Cette émission avait remporté un tel succès qu'elle s'était méritée la première place des cotes d'écoute à Montréal supplantant ainsi "Ed Sullivan", ce qui, il va sans dire, nous avait énormément réjouis. Outre les émissions de variétés, il y eut également à cette époque une floraison de chanteurs populaires qui exprimaient parfaitement l'âme québécoise. Ce fut tout d'abord Félix Leclerc suivi de Gilles Vignealt, de Jean-Pierre Ferland, et plus récemment de Robert Charlebois. Ceci, à mon avis, a permis de développer, de consolider et de raffermir la personnalité de notre télévision.

Il est vrai qu'au début la grille horaire des émissions était moins imposante, les émissions débutant à 16h00. Aujourd'hui, notre programmation commence à 9h15, ce qui signifie que nous sommes en ondes pendant environ le même nombre d'heures que le sont les réseaux CTV, CBC, ou TVA. Naturellement, nous avons dû nous procurer du matériel à l'extérieur. Mais nous avons cependant réussi à diversifier nos sources d'approvisionnement. D'abord, nous avons fondé une communauté des télévisions francophones regroupant la France, la Belgique et la Suisse avec qui nous coproduisons et avec qui nous échangeons certains de nos téléromans; ainsi "Quelle Famille" a passé sur les ondes de l'ORTF; "La Petite Semaine", un nouveau téléroman, a été acheté par la Belgique. De plus, nous

participons activement à des co-productions avec Pathé-Cinéma, l'ORTF, la Belgique; par exemple, "Jos Gaillard", série populaire produite par la France, comprend des épisodes tournés au Québec; on exige à cet effet que des comédiens canadiens fassent partie de la distribution, dans un certain nombre d'épisodes, et qu'on leur attribue un premier ou un deuxième rôle. Dans un autre domaine, on a fait une opérette en Belgique dont la chanteuse principale était Lise Lasalle, une Canadienne.

La télévision française de Radio-Canada a actuellement, pour l'ensemble de son horaire, une teneur canadienne de 68%; environ 12% nous proviennent des Etats-Unis, 10%, à peu près, des pays francophones et le reste d'autres pays.

Une des catégories les plus importantes de la programmation est celle du cinéma. En plus de présenter du cinéma étranger (qu'il soit italien, tchèque, allemand ou polonais), nous avons énormément encouragé l'essor du cinéma canadien, en particulier celui du cinéma québécois; signalons qu'au moins 100 films québécois ont été à l'affiche de Radio-Canada. De plus, nous mettons en ondes cette année une série documentaire intitulée "Cinéma canadien" qui est en quelque sorte une rétrospective de l'activité cinématographique au Canada.

Lorsque nous parlons de la télévision francophone, il importe de souligner l'importance qu'ont eue la langue et la culture française sur son orientation. Il faut aussi dire que la télévision française ne rencontre pas les mêmes difficultés de concurrence qu'a la télévision anglaise face à

nos voisins américains. Au fond, le marché français est partagé entre le réseau privé de langue française, TVA, et le réseau public de Radio-Canada. Il n'y a presque aucun empiétement de la part des stations de langue anglaise.

D'après les sondages, il y a actuellement à Montréal 8% de l'auditoire qui regardent les canaux américains. Mais, comme vous le savez, 35% de la population de la région de Montréal sont anglophones. Ce qui signifie que, même si parmi ce 8% il y a 2 ou 3% de Canadiens français, nous pouvons considérer notre auditoire comme étant un auditoire fidèle. Il est en même temps assez également réparti entre les deux réseaux.

La télévision française de Radio-Canada a beaucoup misé sur le populaire, de sorte qu'un secteur aussi important que celui de l'information a été sensiblement négligé. On enviait énormément le réseau anglais qui faisait, et continue d'ailleurs à le faire, des réalisations remarquables en ce domaine. Depuis ce temps, Radio-Canada a modifié progressivement sa répartition budgétaire et, depuis, nos émissions d'information connaissent un bon succès. Qui n'a pas entendu parler du "60" qui l'an dernier a rejoint un million et demi de téléspectateurs?

Si d'une part, la télévision est à prédominance canadienne, il faut, d'autre part, ajouter que nous présentons également des émissions de sources américaines ou anglaises. Cette année, notre horaire d'automne comprend aux heures de pointe quatre séries américaines: "Walt Disney",

"Doctor Welby", "Flinstones", de même qu'une sélection d'histoires policières américaines. Nous avons décidé de mettre à l'affiche une émission sur trois de séries telles que "Banacek", "Madigan", "Wednesday Night Mystery Movie". Ces séries sont évidemment doublées à Montréal, car nous avons beaucoup insisté pour que le doublage y soit fait dans les cas où nous sommes les premiers preneurs. Il en va de même pour la France ou la Belgique, qui, lorsqu'ils sont les premiers preneurs, font effectuer le doublage dans leurs pays respectifs. De ce fait, l'industrie du doublage a permis de créer un nouveau débouché pour les comédiens et les auteurs canadiens français.

Evidemment, nous devons nous aussi faire face à certains problèmes. Il y a toujours la question d'argent qui, à mon avis, est un grave problème. Il est aussi un fait indéniable: nous desservons une petite population. Le Canada français n'a pas un réservoir vaste comme il s'en trouve aux Etats-Unis, en France, en Angleterre ou au Canada anglais. Par conséquent, l'horaire est alimenté à 95% environ par Montréal, ce qui nous vaut les mêmes remarques et critiques que celles qui sont adressées à Toronto.

Cependant, nos grands problèmes se rattachent à la recherche des auteurs et à celle de l'argent. La télévision coûte de plus en plus cher. Nos téléromans et nos télé-théâtres sont produits électroniquement. Quant au film, il se fait surtout dans le domaine de l'information. Compte tenu de nos budgets, la production de séries filmées est actuellement tout simplement inabordable. Ainsi quand le problème de la violence se pose,

il me semble qu'il ne se pose pas avec la même acuité, ni au même niveau pour notre auditoire.

Bien sûr, les auditeurs protestent de la violence, mais ces protestations portent autant sur le "biaisage" politique que sur les exagérations en matière de sexualité ou sur la programmation de mauvais goût. En fait, cela ne semble pas être pour notre auditoire un problème majeur.

La violence ne semble pas être un problème majeur d'autant plus qu'à l'heure actuelle, nos émissions jeunesse connaissent un grand succès et nous en sommes assez fiers. Les personnages sont devenus des héros pour la jeunesse canadienne française. Je pense à "Bobino", à toute la série de "La Boîte à Surprise", à "Sol et Gobelet", au "Major Plum-Pudding", au "Pirate Maboule" et à tous les personnages bien connus des enfants. Le réseau TVA a également obtenu ce genre de succès populaire. Nos émissions canadiennes sont le reflet du milieu. En ce sens, nous avons tenté de varier le plus possible les divers lieux et situations; situations folkloriques, pourrait-on dire, avec les "Belles Histoires"; de comédie avec "Moi et l'Autre"; de vie des quartiers défavorisés avec "Rue des Pignons". Cette variété des lieux dramatiques permet de refléter, pas d'une façon parfaite mais du moins en partie, les différents milieux et ainsi les gens qui appartiennent à ces divers milieux peuvent, à travers les émissions, s'identifier à un type de personnage ou se reconnaître et cela les aide à vivre. Cela a été, à mon avis, un élément important de ce qu'on a appelé la "révolution tranquille" au Canada français. Donc, nous devons faire face à un problème de ressources

intellectuelles et créatrices qui demeure un grand problème parce que nous produisons trop. Nous sommes dans l'incapacité de produire moins, nous sommes amenés à produire toujours plus. Cela provient du fait que les Canadiens français réclament un service public d'importance égale à celui des Canadiens anglais et que, de leur côté, les Canadiens anglais affirment que s'ils n'arrivent pas à produire autant que les Américains, ceux-ci les étoufferont. Si nous comparons le Canada, avec une population de 22 millions, et la province de Québec aux pays ayant une population analogue, nous constatons que nous produisons beaucoup plus que la Tchécoslovaquie, la Pologne, les pays scandinaves, etc.

Je crois vous avoir donné un portrait assez fidèle de ce que nous tentons de faire. Bien sûr, il y a des domaines qui exigeraient une plus grande attention, qui exigeraient qu'on les développe, comme celui du théâtre. Il est regrettable qu'on ne puisse présenter autant de pièces de théâtre qu'on aurait voulu, et de ce point de vue là, c'est même déplorable aussi bien du côté anglais que du côté français. Si nous ne nous lançons pas dans la production massive de téléthéâtres, c'est bien en raison de leur coût. Les téléthéâtres nous coûtent quatre fois plus cher qu'ils ne nous en coûtaient autrefois. Et quelqu'un nous disait qu'on achetait maintenant les séries américaines à deux mille dollars. Ces dernières sont aujourd'hui vendues à quatre et cinq mille dollars la demi-heure. Tout est donc une question d'argent. Tandis que nos budgets montent l'escalier, nos coûts prennent l'ascenseur.

Nous comptons toutefois maintenir la qualité de notre service de télévision. A vrai dire, nous n'avons pas le choix. Le Parlement nous a confié un mandat que nous devons remplir.

The central area of discussion following the panel centred around the feasibility and desirability of various options Canadians could use to control scenes of televised violence.

James McGraw, Member of Parliament for Saint John's East, was particularly interested in finding out if efforts were being made by Canadian broadcasters to develop an effective industry code. He was at a loss to understand how the CBC could profess to have a code while at the same time continuing to carry programs, such as Cannon, that fit into the category of violent programs.

> "An industry code would be preferable to regulations, but I believe very strongly, as one who is very much interested in this subject as a legislator, that if there is not an industry code, then there will have to be ultimately a code imposed by Parliament."

Ron Mitchell, vice-chairman for the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, replied that the CAB had decided at its annual meeting in May to authorize a very close review of the violence situation. The board of directors would consider possible further steps after examining the

findings of the review in September.

> "I should note that in the CRTC material that was distributed, the figure of three percent was used for violence in Canadian programming. I think that indicates as well as many other of the things that Canadian broadcasters do, that we have a sense of responsibility."

The president of CTV, Murray Chercover, noted there are very few countries in which there is not legislation regulating program content.

> "They're the free countries of the world. In every totalitarian society with absolute control of the media there are very severe restrictions on what you can present, philosophically, in respect to violence, in respect to every form of behaviour and political thought."

Mr. Chercover went on to point out that even in the free countries most broadcasting organizations have some form of code or self-examination. From time to time, these codes are violated by creative persons involved in programming but, he added, "I'm delighted to say we're flexible enough to provide for that."

Mr. Chercover suggested any effort at government control

would surely raise questions about the merit of other federal broadcasting policies.

> "How can we even talk in real terms about limited or setting up rules or, as Mr. McGraw suggests, legislating controls on Canadian broadcasting when the same legislature demanded that there be no limitation to the access of foreign signals for our viewers?"

Dr. Ralph Dent, a professor at the Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto, expressed irritation with the suggestion made throughout the Symposium that a child can learn violence from television.

> "It teaches him about violence. It does not teach him to be violent. What teaches him to be violent is the successful use of violence. If we're really concerned about this, we should be concentrating on the ways in which we do, in fact, reinforce violence in our society."

Dr. Dent objected very strongly to suggestions of either industry or government regulation.

> "I think it's the responsibility of me as a member of the public to let the media know what I don't like. I want the right to let

you know that when I turn off the set I'm not going to watch your program anymore. I might do it for the same reason that the CRTC would do it, but I cannot see that public board wielding that sort of power over something that I have a right to see or not to see myself."

Ken Sobol, a specialist in childrens' programming, considered Dr. Dent's attitudes unrealistic and confused.

"Of course, any kid can distinguish between a cartoon fantasy and his own actions. However, what he is also seeing is what Pauline Kael calls the absence of social consequences to any of the acts. To say that you, as a member of the public, want the opportunity to decide what your children should see is senseless in that the public is doing a very poor job. Canada and the United States are the only countries in the world that allow children essentially free choice of what they are going to see. You give a choice between a comic book and literature and certainly most children are going to choose the comic book. You are paying full service to free choice, but look at what you end up with."

Ken Marchant, director of research for the LaMarsh Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry, suggested the Symposium really hadn't confronted the fact that most of the violent programming originates in the United States and not Canada. "It's in our environment", he said, "but it's not something we can readily filter out or control."

Ehor Boyanowski, a professor of psychology at Simon Fraser University, responded that Canadians should not be too quick to assume that there isn't violent content in their own entertainment programming.

> "The most pervasive three-hour childrens' program that is produced largely in this country has been demonstrated to teach acts of mayhem, to reinforce them, to socialize a child to behave in an extremely aggressive manner. Yet NHL Hockey is somehow regarded as beyond the scope of control...It is totally Canadian programming, condoned by the CRTC, by the CBC, by CTV and by the society."

Jean Campbell, director of early and basic education for the Alberta Educational Communications Authority, pointed out that while the CBC code may be stringently applied to domestic production and design techniques,

its impact on the selection of foreign acquisitions seemed less precise. Ms. Campbell suggested the same criteria should apply to both domestic and foreign programs shown on Canadian networks.

Returning to a suggestion raised by Ralph Ellis in his panel presentation, Dr. Garth Jowett wondered why Canadian broadcasters concerned with excessive violence have not considered importing a larger number of the interesting, high-quality British dramatic productions.

Les Brown speculated that if Canadian broadcasters were to exercise greater selectivity in their choice of imported programs, the American industry might very well be forced to produce fewer violent programs. He noted that the money paid by the American networks for most dramatic series often barely meets the production expenses. Any real profit is derived from foreign sales and eventual daytime syndication. The decision of several American stations to discontinue showing violent programs during the six-to-eight o'clock time slot has already resulted in a significant loss of revenue for several series. 'Mannix', as an example, received a very poor reception on the syndication market, while 'Cannon' was withdrawn from sale altogether.

"That is a very serious crunch. And if they can't depend on getting the kinds of money for their programs that they used to get from Canada or Mexico or Australia, then they are going to be in serious trouble."

Dr. Liebert agreed that such selectivity would provide Canadians with more power to affect the nature of American programming than most people at the Symposium would suspect.

"If there was a non-U.S. market for other kinds of programming, you would be putting the crunch on violent programs and encouraging other types. Canada has a great deal of force through the dollar."

Symposium on Television Violence
Colloque sur la violence à la télévision

ECONOMIC REALITIES OF CANADIAN PRODUCTION*

*one of a series of papers prepared by the following researchers:

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Views expressed in these papers do not necessarily reflect those of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission

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THE ECONOMIC REALITIES OF CANADIAN TELEVISION PRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Economic factors play an important role in any consideration of the amount and the nature of so-called "violent" programming which appears on Canadian television screens. Such factors as the relative size of the Canadian and American markets, the nature of program importation and co-production undertakings, and the competitive situation which exists between Canadian networks and those of the United States in cabled and border areas, all have an effect on the mix of what Canadians actually view, as well as on what types of programs are produced here.

For example, the Canadian commercial broadcaster is influenced in his purchasing and scheduling decisions by the overall merchandizing strategies of the American broadcasters and program production companies, with whom he often competes, or uses as a program supplier.

The dramatic difference in market size, and thus the potential revenue versus production costs, make the "produce or purchase" option very much a question of economics for Canadian broadcasters. An hour-long U.S. action/adventure film series generally recoups its production costs through its U.S. network sale. Such series as MANNIX, CANNON and KOJAK are bought by the American network for a quarter-million dollars per episode, while a Canadian network (and any other foreign purchaser) can purchase the series for as little as $5,000.

Further, due to its larger domestic market, an American network can ask upwards of $100,000 per minute for advertising messages, guaranteeing exposure to an average of twenty million viewers in prime-time. Affiliate fees and distribution costs for the given network, when added to the purchase and production costs, yield a far lower margin in both percentage and real dollar terms in Canada.

Such economic realities mean that programming purchased outside Canada in effect subsidizes the production of domestic programming for a commercial network. Production costs in Canada, while not as high as in the United States, are still expensive enough to force further practical realities when a network plans for its own programming. An examination of what the CTV Television network produces domestically indicates this quite clearly: The fall 1974 schedule in prime-time shows 4 half-hour music shows, 2 current affairs series, one game show, and 3 drama series. Two of the latter were co-productions, meaning that CTV paid only a part of the actual production budgets (estimated in these cases at about $70,000 per half-hour episode each). The other drama series was a studio, video-taped situation comedy produced at about half the cost of the other two filmed series. The average half-hour program costs for the other series were in the neighbourhood of $15,000 to $20,000.

North American audiences have shown a preference in prime-time for series drama over other forms of television. As a result of this, the American

networks purchase very few music/ variety series. They specialize in the action/adventure and situation comedy forms, the former in one-hour formats, the latter in the shorter half-hour form. Canadian audiences (as do British and European viewers) still enjoy music programs, perhaps because they are offered a wide range of them on their own networks. Thus, these and current affairs programs have become standard and traditional forms of Canadian (and European) television production. They are economical forms of television in terms of both facilities and talent.

The network programmer may argue that to produce purely Canadian action/ adventure programming, while being an admirable goal, would be a misdirection of already scarce programming dollars. Canadian networks can choose such proven programming from either the United States or Britain. The dominance of the U.S. supplier, of course, comes about by the similarity of English speaking markets and the availability of what can be considered "pre-sold" programming. Co-production of such series may be considered since it lessens the capital investment needed by the Canadian network. This, indeed, has been the traditional response of the CTV Television Network with such undertakings as POLICE SURGEON and THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON, among others.

To provide alternative, yet complementary types of Canadian drama, the commercial networks in both English and French Canada have tended to opt

for the situation comedy/ teleromans/ quasi-soap opera form of video tape frama. Producers feel that this is an area in which Canadians can better compete, where costs are considerably lower, and where domestic situational themes may be better explored. Without outside forms of subsidy, only the CBC can afford tc produce hour-long action/ adventure film formats similar to those made in the U.S. or Britain. The CBC can also provide a more varied diet of television drama which is virtually unknown on U.S. and Canadian networks.

BROADCASTING AND CANADIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Much has been written about the unfavourable size and geographic distribution of the Canadian marketplace, and its relationship to all forms of economic development. This factor has also acted on the broadcasting sector so as to serve as a major consideration in the development of Canadian program production.

Through-out its history succesive Canadian governments have not employed normal business laissez-faire attitudes towards film, television, theatre, the plastic arts, publishing. This has been done to ensure a national presence in domestic consumption patterns.

In a discussion of television, economies of scale and a small market have, as with other industries, places the Canadian program production industry in a somewhat disadvantaged position. In practice revenues are limited by

In practice revenues are limited by the number of potential viewers, which in Canada is 21,600,000 - split on a 4 to 1 ratio by language - relative to a potential audience in the United States of 203,000,000. However, the quality of a program in any a given format is determined to an extent by expenditures on production; something which may be considered on one level a necessary but not sufficient condition of measure of "quality". In other words, it cannot be said that the quality of a filmed action adventure drama is not dependent on finances, although there may be a level of expenditure after which money does not necessarily improve the quality. If then, the revenue available as defined by the size of market is less than that required by a threshold level of programming resources (allowing for the cost of the distribution system and a suitable level of profit), then there is no incentive for domestic production. Activity will then occur only if there are subsidies from some other sources or if the market can substantially be enlarged. Market size and program distribution economy of scale constraints explain why, to an extent, much Canadian-produced (and also European) television programming differs in style from that available from U.S. sources. A heavy concentration on filmed drama in the U.S. being a case in point.

Advertiser supported television in Canada has been augmented in the public sector by other sources of revenue; specifically by federal and now provincial funding such monies in fact ouweigh revenues from commercial sources in television. But, another equally important, yet less obvious kind of "subsidy" occurs as a result of scheduling and advertising rate

structures which allow for a profit margin from foreign programs, particularly in prime time, being applied to support the sche uling and production of Canadian programs. Such a relationship is an important economic aspect of the present domestic system and it can be demonstrated that were this not the case, then economic constraints would have further limited the scale of Canadian production to a level far below what it is now.

Expansion of the market through export sales is not a general phenomenon and such sales do not represent a major addition of revenues to the Canadian broadcasting system. On the whole, when programs produced in Canada are exported, they have been co-produced with foreign and Canadian capital. Naturally the returns from foreign sales are only proportional to the capital invested by Canadians. With such co-productions, only a fraction of the production funds need be supplied by Canadian producers (about one-quarter) but a disadvantage of this arrangement is that unless sufficient program sales in the United States (as the largest potential market) are guaranteed, then there is little hope of recovering remaining costs for the non-Canadian partner. A second disadvantage is that the content and format of co-productions is defined by the needs of the (principal) market - in this case the U.S. As a result of recent programming decisions made in the United States, two Canadian drama co-productions have been discontinued.

BASIC ECONOMICS OF CANADIAN TELEVISION SCHEDULING

The economic constraints operating on the broadcasting industry become

clear through an analysis which uses as an example, the prime time schedule of the two major English television networks, the public CBC and private CTV. Although the figures included are approximations this demonstration will, nonetheless, provide an adequate model for discussion.

Applying the program schedule from the 1974-75 season, revenues for each hour or half-hour segment are estimated using published advertising rates and assume that 80 per cent of the maximum allowable commercial minutes per hour are sold.* Actual revenues will be influences by other factors such as special discounts and "packages" which encourage advertizers to buy spots in both American and Canadian programming.

* Revenue estimates are calculated from Card-Canadian Advertising Rates and Data, January 1975. For CTV, the 30 second rate for 52 weeks is used, while for CBC, the one minute rate for 43 stations is used (from 10:00 p.m. to 11 p.m. when CBC shows public affairs, it is assumed that only 2 minutes per half hour are sold). Hockey has been excluded since it is sponsored of a different basis.

Canadian program production costs used are estimates, and are as follows:

Table I: Canadian Prime-Time Program Production Costs*

PROGRAM TYPE	COST/ I/2 HOUR
Variety	$I5,000
Music anthology	$20,000
Drama- tape film	$30,000 $65,000
Current affairs	$I5,000
Documentary	$20,000
Game	$8,500

The costs of production in the United States of prime time entertainment programs shown by the major networks are clearly more expensive, due to the scale of the American market providing far more advertising revenue which allows a greater allocation of revenue to program production and talent costs.

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* There is often a difference between the production cost and the price paid by a network for a program. This difference may be absorbed by the affiliated as part of its "membership" in the network, as is the case with CTV. Even U.S. production companies are claiming their network sales price is not recovering their production costs, making syndication and foreign sales even more important to their existence. (see Broadcasting, July 2I, I975 page 22 "Producers say crunch hurts in their costs network's pay.")

Typically, and fairly consistently, American programs of the type imported into Canada, run $125,000 per half hour to produce.* It is not this production cost which is relevent, however, to the scheduling decisions of Canadian networks, it is the purchase price. This is in the order of $2,000 per half-hour, since the price NBC, CBS or ABC already covers an amortized production cost in the American market. Clearly, if audiences, and therefore revenues, for Canadian series and the American imports were the same, there would be a drastic difference in the margin per hour remaining after the costs of purchase or production have been subtracted from revenue. (Audiences are in fact lower on the average for Canadian programs but this is discussed separately) Therefore no subtleties are needed to explain the dominance of American programming - other than it being a superior business proposition.

Looking at the prime time schedule model of January 1975 for CTV,**the average margin per half hour on Canadian programming can be estimated at $55 while that for foreign programming it is $21,000 per half hour. This estimate excludes the two co-productions, "Swill Family Robinson" and "Police Surgeon" since only one-quarter of the total production cost was supplied by CTV. However, if these two programs were produced without the

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* What the American networks pay to independent production companies for these programs is published annually, in Broadcasting, May 12, 1975, issue pg. 22-23, is the basis for these cost estimates. The actual total expenditures on production per episode is probably slightly higher. Once the networks rights to the programs expire (generally after two runs) there is possibility for residual income to the producers from other forms of distribution like syndication off-network, foreign sales, etc. Such additional sales make it possible for producers to absorb certain cost over runs not met by the U.S. network's policy of paying a fixed price, per half-hour, regardless of actual production cost.

** Appendix I

benefit of co-production financing, the average margin would have fallen to a loss of $8,860 per half hour. Applying this same calculation to the equivalent CBC English prime time schedule, the average margin on Canadian programs is a loss of $2,050 per holf hour, and $20,6000 "profit" per half hour for foreign programs. While the same economic forces apply to public broadcasting, the CBC's Parliamentary Grant of $297,900,149 overshadows its $59,936,000 of net advertising revenue from television.*

It can thus be concluded that the high margins between revenues and costs from imported programs make the present level and quality of Canadian produced programming possible. That is, the margins available from a Canadian production are insufficient for them to exist in a schedule without the revenue available from foreign programs.**

From the above it is not to be implied that Canadian programming will always be a non-viable economic proposition. It is simply a statement of the existing situation. Also the question of what is an adequate margin on an hour of prime-time programming is not discussed here, and is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice to say that this margin must allow not only for distribution, selling, administration and depreciation costs, but also adequate level of profit. Also to be noted is the fact that nearly all Canadian

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*CBC Annual Report, 1974-75, pg.70. Net television advertising revenue is gross advertising revenue minus Commissions to agencies and networks.
**This is not the case for the major private French language station in Quebec. It uses few imported series and achieves high viewership and adequate profitability with its own relatively low cost production. In this case its style and program models are not based on the U.S., but reflect the different view of television held in French-speaking Quebec, and Europe as a whole.

programs are produced by the networks themselves, or by their affiliates. A situation analogous to the U.S. one, whith private independent producers, is not applicable to the current Canadian broadcasting industry.

THE DEMAND FOR PROGRAMS

The allocation of advertising rates and program expenditures is, in a commercial model, a function of the level of audience. Canadian programs because of their different character in prime-time, often do not achieve the viewership or the ratings (percentage of total audience) that foreign programs do. According to a BBM market survey (Fall of I974, Toronto) only five of the top 20 programs were Canadian. Of these, two were news and one was NHL Hockey. Only the latter was among the top ten programs (fourth). (see Table II)

Advertising rates, of necessity reflect this situation. In the CTV rate structure for prime-time, the advertising rate on Canadian programming for a single 30-second spot is 22 per cent less than the equivalent rate for non-Canadian program.* Canadian programming is discounted even more in actual practice because an additional discount applies on a graduated scale when up to fifty-two, 30-second spots are purchased. For non-Canadian programs the fifty-two week rate is 22 per cent less than the one week rate, while for Canadian programming the equivalent discount is 30 per cent. As an incentive to buy spots during Canadian programs, there is a package discont for combinations of spots bought on both Canadian and non-Canadian programs.

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*CTV Rate Card for January I975

Table II

TOP 20 PROGRAMS IN TORONTO

ADULTS I8 AND OVER

BBM FALL I974
CENTRAL AREA

PROGRAM	RATING	VIOLENT NON VIOLENT SPORTS NEWS	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	ACTUAL AUDIENCE #
MOVIE (MIDNIGHT COWBOY)	20	V-2	U.S.	397,422
ALL IN THE FAMILY	I8	N.V.	U.S.	357,679
M.A.S.H.	I8	N.V.	U.S.	357,679
N.H.L. HOCKEY	I7	SPORTS	C	337,808
DHODA (WBEN-TV)	I4	N.V.	U.S.	278,I95
IRONSIDE	I3	V-I	U.S.	258,3II
HARRY-O	I3	V-I	U.S.	258,3II
RHODA (CBLT)	I2	N.V.	U.S.	238,44I
MARY TYLER MOORE	I2	N.V.	U.S.	238,44I
MOVIE (NEW CENTURIONS)	I2	V-2	U.S.	238,44I
KOJACK	I2	V-I	U.S.	238,44I
COLLABORATORS	II	V-2	C	2I8,57I
WORLD BEAT (MONDAY)	II	NEWS	C	2I8,57I
CANNON	I0	V-I	U.S.	I98,0I0
CEILIDH	I0	N.V.	C	I98,70I
MAN ABOUT THE HOUSE	I0	N.V.	B	I98,70I
ROCKFORD FILES	I0	V-I	U.S.	I98,70I
WALT DISNEY	I0	N.V.	U.S.	I98,70I
WORLD BEAT (WEDNESDAY)	I0	NEWS	C	I98,70I
STREETS OF SAN FRANSCISCO	9	V-I	U.S.	I78,839

TOTAL

9-VIOLENT I4-U.S.
8-NON VIOLENT 5-CANADIAN
I-SPORT I-BRITISH
2-NEWS

V-I : Coded violent with reference to compiled list

V-2 : Coded violent with reference to TV Guide synopsis

N.V. : For and explanation of methodology used in this coding, see Symposium paper: Public Preference, Production Source and Amount of Violence and Non-Violent Programming...

If the rate structure is examined from the point of view of the advertiser, then the system rationalizes the cost per thousand viewers between Canadian and foreign programs. Taking the CTV schedule for the Fall of I974 and comparing actual audiences as reported by the BBM Bureau of Measurement to the appropriate advertising rates for each program, calculations show that the cost per thousand viewers on Canadian programs is $I.34, while on foreign (all are American in this sample), the cost is $I.32.* The lower audiences for Canadian programs requires an advertising rate differential to equalize the cost of buying viewers.

VIOLENCE IN AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

What can be said about the relationship between such ecomomic variables and the production and viewing of programs with violence?

The first point to be made is that the supply of violent programming is predominantly from United States imports. A division of all half-hour program segments shown in Toronto between country of origin and between violent, non-violent, sports, and news, demonstrated that from all sources 34 per cent of the programming is violent, and largest proportion of programming (68%) is American in origin. 47 per cent of American imports are violent, while only three per cent of Canadian programming is violent.** Violent programs are of the action/ adventure film drama type which puts them in an "expensive" class of programs. As demonstrated, the production

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* To compute cost per thousand, the 30-second rate for 52 weeks was used.

**Table III

of this type of program in Canada cannot be supported solely from advertising revenue. However, in the U.S. it does appear that there is a relationship between production cost and violence, as they are the most costly and technically complex form of TV production. Drama on television in the U.S. has been directed towards violent-crime action, a conscious programming decision.* And to a Canadian broadcaster such series are less expensive than domestic production.

Any further discussion on audience viewing preferences would be out of place here, but are the subject of another symposium paper.

What should be concluded is that violent programs are popular but if the range of drama forms were broadened to include reasonable choice, as it is in the special circumstances of the French speaking market in Quebec, violence would not rate as highly as it now appears to do. Further, it is far easier to program a competitive schedule based on a mix of hour-long and half-hour productions that of the current action/ adventure diet of one-hour and 70-minute series.

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*There is a structural frature of commercial television which is not discussed and which relates to why the diet of prime-time programming on the three American networks is dominated by a few program types (crime drama being the case in point), and therefore why the choice of American drama imports is limited. Attempting to answer this question involves a discussion of whether the economic incentives inherent in competition for advertising between networks favours diversification or duplication of programming. A rigorous analysis is complex, but a clear discussion of research in the area can be found in B.M. Owen, J.H. Beebe, and W.G. Manning Jr., Television Economics, Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass., I972.

Table III

% OF I/2 HOUR SEGMENTS ACCORDING TO

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND PROGRAM TYPE I.
TORONTO MARKET AREA
OCTOBER 28 - NOVEMBER 3, I974

COUNTRY OF ORIGINE	Canadian Public I					Canadian Private I					Canadian Private 2					Canadian Private 3				
	V	N	NE	S	T	V	N	NE	S	T	V	N	NE	S	T	V	N	NE	S	T
CANADIAN	6	58	26	I0	60	3	69	24	4	36	-	68	I8	I4	33	-	46	48	6	39
U.S.	2I	79	-	-	33	82	I6	-	2	64	54	38	-	8	57	49	5I	-	-	44
BRITISH	20	80	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	I00	-	-	8	43	57	-	-	I7
OTHER	-	I00	-	-	I	-	-	-	-	-	-	I00	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
%TOTAL	I2	67	I5	6	I00	55	35	8	2	I00	3I	54	6	9	I00	29	50	I9	2	I00

	Canadian Private 4					American Private I					American Private 2					American Private 3				
	V	N	NE	S	T	V	N	NE	S	T	V	N	NE	S	T	V	N	NE	S	T
CANADIAN	-	82	I3	5	45	I00-	-	-	I		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
U.S.	5I	49	-	-	49	39	40	I4	7	99	36	42	I4	8	I00	43	25	20	I2	IC
BRITISH	-	40	-	60	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
% TOTAL	25	63	6	6	I00	39	39	I5	7	I00	36	42	I4	8	I00	43	25	20	I2	I

ALL STATIONS
% TOTAL

	V	N	NE	S	T
CANADIAN	3	64	25	8	27
U.S.	47	38	9	6	68
BRITISH	24	66	-	I0	4
OTHER	-	I00	-	-	I
% TOTAL	34	47	I3	6	I00

I. In this table program type refers to violent, non violent, news and sports.

**Appendix

CTV NETWORK PRIME TIME SCHEDULE (Winter 1975)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00	Ian Tyson $16,000 15,000 +1,000	Headline Hunters $16,000 8,500 +7,500	That's My Mama $23,000 2,000 +21,000	Funny Farm $16,000 15,000 +1,000	Swiss Family Robinson $16,000 65,000 -49,000	Emergency $46,000 4,000 +42,000	Born Free $46,000 4,000 +42,000
7:30	$6,000,000 Man $46,000 4,000 +42,000	Tuesday Night Movie $79,000 6,000 +73,000	Local	Excuse My French $16,000 30,000 -14,000	The Rookies $46,000 4,000 +42,000		
8:00			Hockey/ Movies	Kung Fu $46,000 4,000 +42,000		Academy Perform-ance $92,000 12,500 +79,500	Kojak $46,000 4,000 +42,000
8:30	Streets of San Francisco $46,000 4,000 +42,000				Adam 12 $23,000 2,000 +21,000		
9:00		Marcus Welby $46,000 4,000 +42,000		Police Surgeon $16,000 65,000 -49,000	Friday Mystery Movie $92,000 8,000 +84,000		Medical Centre $46,000 4,000 +42,000
9:30	Pig'n Whistle $16,000 15,000 +1,000			Maclear $16,000 15,000 +1,000			
10:00	Ironside $46,000 4,000 +42,000	Harry O $46,000 4,000 +42,000		Nakia $46,000 4,000 +42,000		Local	W5 $32,000 30,000 +2,000
10:30			Banjo Parlour $16,000 15,000 +1,000			Local	
11:00							

Revenue - Costs = Margin per program

CBC NETWORK PRIME TIME SCHEDULE (Winter 1975)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00	Local	Local	Local	Local	Local	Local	Beach-combers $24,000 65,000 -41,000
7:30	Local	Black Beauty $24,000 2,000 +22,000	Music Machine $24,000 15,000 +9,000	House of Pride $24,000 30,000 -6,000	Howie Meeker Mr. Chips $24,000 20,000 +4,000	Maude $24,000 2,000 +22,000	Irish Rovers $24,000 15,000 +9,000
8:00	Mary Tyler Moore $24,000 2,000 +22,000	Happy Days $24,000 2,000 +22,000	Nature of Things/ This Land $24,000 15,000 +9,000	Carol Burnett $48,000 4,000 +44,000	All in the Family $24,000 2,000 +22,000	Hockey Night in Canada/ The Pallisors	The Waltons $48,000 4,000 +44,000
8:30	This is the Law $24,000 8,500 +15,500	Police Story $48,000 4,000 +44,000	Musicamera $48,000 40,000 +8,000		Mash $24,000 2,000 +22,000		
9:00	Cannon $48,000 4,000 +44,000			Stompin Tom's Canada $24,000 15,000 +9,000	Tommy Hunter $48,000 30,000 +18,000		Sam Adams/ Collabora-tors/Anthol-ogy Drama/ Performance $ 48,000 120,000 -72,000
9:30		Front Page Challenge $24,000 8,500 +15,500	Third Testament/ Specials $48,000 40,000 +8,000	Chico and the Man $24,000 2,000 +22,000			
1:00	Naked Mind/ Middle Age/ Old Timers $ 9,500 15,000 -5,500	Up Canada $ 9,500 15,000 -5,500		Adrienne at Large $ 9,500 15,000 -5,500	Rhoda $24,000 2,000 +22,000		Market Place Documentary $ 9,500 15,000 -5,500
	People of Our Time/ Man Alive 8,500 5,000 500	News-magazine $ 8,500 15,000 -6,500	First Per-son Singu-lar/Paci-fic Canada $ 8,500 20,000 -11,500	Some Honorable Members $ 8,500 15,000 -6,500	Man about the House/ Gallery $20,500 2,000 +18,500		Ombudsman $ 8,500 15,000 -6,500

ue - Costs = Margin per program

CONCLUSION

It has thus been demonstrated that the Canadian broadcasting system has become economically dependent on foreign-produced (read U.S.) programming to provide a counterbalance to the more expensive requirements of domestic program production. The nature of the Canadian television production industry tends to create programming which is considerably different in both style and content from the overall offerings of the three US networks. Such programming is far less indeed violent at all. However, for the television industry in Canada to survive without inexpensive US produced programming, new sources of monies must be forthcoming. The source of such monies is an area for considerable future study and will not guarantee that Canadians will change their viewing habits when offered American violent programs either off-air from US border stations, or via cable distribution.

SECTION FOUR: CONTROL AND IMPROVEMENT

Cultural products intended for mass consumption have traditionally been the object of attempts at various forms of social control or outright censorship. These attempts have always been the subject of controversy. Moreover, the considerable development of electronic means of production and diffusion in the last twenty years throws into doubt society's ability to control individual cases of cultural content deemed undesirable.

This section of the Symposium was designed to bring to light some of the social and legal implications of various control mechanisms. It consisted of a formal presentation by John Lawrence, chief legal counsel of the CRTC, and a commentary by Dr. Hans Mohr, a commissioner with the Federal Law Reform Commission.

The Legal and Social Implications of Control Mechanisms

John Lawrence was general counsel for the Canadian Radio-Television Commission from 1971 to September, 1975. He was born in Kingston and educated in the Eastern Townships of Quebec where he attended Bishop's University. He studied law at McGill University, receiving his B.C.L. in 1956. Mr. Lawrence was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1975.

My subject is the Legal Implications of Control Mechanisms. What I propose to do, if you will bear with me, is to take you through the kind of thought process I have gone through in arriving at the conclusion I have arrived at. I am going to pose questions and I am going to answer them, referring to certain cases, but I'm trying to stay away from a very technical, legal argument. You can't entirely avoid it because, after all, it is a legal question. So the overall question I pose is: What is the legal validity of laws or regulations purporting to limit or prohibit television violence?

Well, the first question is, what laws are, or could be, applicable? The courts, as recently as in the CFRB case, which is an Ontario Court of Appeal case, and even more recently, the Quebec Court of Appeal in the Kellogg's case, have again affirmed that broadcasting, including television transmissions, are a matter of federal jurisdiction. They have said that this jurisdiction extends to the intellectual content of transmissions and that it is exclusive. We are therefore dealing in this area with federal laws.

There are a number of federal laws relating to the content of broadcast programs, such as the Election Expenses Act and the Food and Drugs Act. However, those of interest in dealing

with this matter are the 1968 Broadcasting Act, the Criminal Code and the Canadian Bill of Rights.

How could the regulation of television violence be dealt with under the Broadcast Act? The Act opens, as you are probably all aware, by stating in eleven paragraphs a comprehensive broadcasting policy for Canada. It then establishes the Canadian Radio-Television Commission to regulate and supervise all aspects of the Canadian broadcasting system, with a view to implementing that broadcasting policy.

The Commission has power to issue, amend, renew, suspend and revoke broadcasting licences, as well as a power to affix conditions of license which are related to the specific circumstances of licensees. Here, however, we are presumably searching for a generally applicable standard, one which would apply to all violence on television. Thus, we must look to the power of the Commission to make regulations.

Section 16 of the Act declares that in furtherence of its objects the Commission may make regulations applicable to all persons holding broadcasting licences respecting standards of programs. Is a regulation limiting or prohibiting violence on television a regulation respecting standards of programs?

Well, what are standards of programs? I find this a difficult term. If it means defining quality of programs, then, as the 1965 Report of the Committee on Broadcasting points out:

> As to the regulation of program standards, we admit at once that quality cannot be legislated. It is possible to prohibit programs that disturb public order or offend against good taste and morals, but there is no guarantee that programs complying with such regulations will achieve a high level of quality.

It seems clear that a regulation such as Section 5 1(c) of the Television Regulations, which prohibits the broadcast of any obscene language or pictoral representation, is a regulation respecting standards of programs. The problem in this area of standards is establishing objective criteria. Obscenity is a good example. This is a term which has an ancient lineage, and it has been recognized as a legitimate limitation on free speech, but the question is, what does it mean?

Now that's not the subject of the discussion here today, but to have an idea of the complexity of the issue, I refer you to Professor Tarnapolsky's discussion of it at pages 89 and 90 of the Cases and Materials--that blue book that you have--and you will see there that the Supreme Court ruled that Lady Chatterley's Lover is not obscene - by a decision of

five judges to four. Almost like Canada versus Russia. It's the only method we have of deciding these things, but even to state it that way is to recognize that it's a very difficult issue. Five to four, it's not obscene. It might just as easily have been five to four, obscene, and frankly, you're dealing with a subjective judgment, and as soon as you deal with subjective judgments you are into the whole question of freedom of speech problems.

Without going into the whole question of standards of programs, it would seem to me that if a regulation concerning obscenity is considered to be a regulation regarding standards of programs, then a regulation regarding violence would equally be considered to be so. In fact, the definition of "obscenity" in the Criminal Code states that sex linked with violence, if it is unduly exploited as a dominant characteristic of a publication, is obscene, and so violence is linked to sex there.

Fine. So, what is violence? The Criminal Code doesn't define it. If you draft a regulation prohibiting violence on television, can you, for instance, have an argument? I saw a program on CFVO, the Ottawa cooperative station, the other day--it was a therapy session--and, boy, were they

going at it. Nobody was getting hit, but the language was really intense and people were very emotional. That was certainly a violent scene.

The Shakespearean tragedies have already been spoken of, but how about ballet? All those guys swinging those beautiful girls around. Is that violence, or is it art? That's a little silly, but yet, you know, you get into these problems. Now you could utilize, it seems to me, a formulation based on that concerning obscenity, that the undue exploitation of violence as a dominant characteristic of a production is prohibited. But you still have, in the final analysis, with that kind of a definition, to go to the Supreme Court to see who is going to win.

So, suppose you try to prohibit specific acts of violence. You're not much better off. Here I would like to refer to some materials that are in the book and just briefly, to give some idea, I'm going to refer to some actions dealt with by the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America Code of 1934. These are very old but, I think, are very amusing, and they do try to, they do delineate the kind of problem.

For instance, "the technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation." How could you put

that in a regulation? "The use of liquor in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterization, will not be shown." Profanity under any circumstances is prohibited, including specific words, for instance: "Alleycat (applied to a woman)", "finger (the)", "goose (in a vulgar sense)", "nuts (except when meaning crazy)"--you know, you've got to wonder how Lenny would have done under that. Now, this is beautiful: "scenes of passion must be treated with an honest acknowledgement of human nature in its normal reactions. Many scenes cannot be presented without arousing dangerous emotions on the part of the immature, the young or the criminal classes".

But, a little more seriously, here is something from the NAB Television Code in the U.S.:

> The use of horror for its own sake will be eliminated; the use of visual or aural effects which would shock or alarm the viewer, and the detailed presentation of brutality or physical agony by sight or by sound are not permissible.

A regulation might well read, "The detailed presentation of brutality or physical agony by sight or by sound is prohibited". That is the sort of thing you get, if you had a regulation. So, what's "detailed"? What's "brutality"? What's "physical agony"?--"by sight or by

sound". Well, those are the kind of problems.

The CBC Code says this: "avoid excessive aggression, including all torture and sadistic beatings", and "avoid animals being hit, or cruelty to animals in any form." A regulation would read: "Cruelty to animals in any form shall not be depicted on television." And, finally, a regulation saying, "If in doubt, cut."

I'm not, by any means, denigrating these codes. I don't mean that in the slightest. What I'm trying to point out is that when you get to regulation, you are into something very different. You have to be very precise, you have to be objective, because if you are not both precise and objective, you're subjecting the people who are subject to that regulation to a jeopardy that they are not able to determine.

I think, maybe, another example is a good one. Say you wish to prohibit scenes depicting murder. So you can fire a gun fifty times at a guy and if he is still alive when you pass on to the next scene, that's not murder because he didn't die. Then you say, "Well, alright, we'll have to prohibit attempted murder". So if you

shoot once,you are outside the regulation. You know, you can get more and more complex as you get into the problem, but I just wish to point out that it would be very difficult to couch any regulation.

However, assume you could overcome that, are there other aspects of the Broadcasting Act which are applicable. Yes. Section 3(c) states:

> All persons licensed to carry on broadcasting undertakings have a responsibility for programs they broadcast but the right to freedom of expression...subject only to generally applicable statutes and regulations, is unquestioned.

So it is clear that the broadcaster, not the regulatory agency or anyone else, is responsible for what he broadcasts.

I note just in passing that originally that legislation read that the broadcaster was "responsible for <u>the effects</u> of the programs" that they broadcast. There was an exchange in the Committee in Parliament between Judy LaMarsh and Don Jamieson, Don Jamieson stating that that phrase was too broad, that how could a broadcaster be responsible for the death of a psychopath, for instance, as a result of what he broadcast? He couldn't know that effect. So the phrase was limited. But I think it's a very interesting historical note, in light of what we're discussing here today.

The responsibility of a broadcaster under the Act does not detract from the right to freedom of expression, and that freedom of expression can only be limited by laws and regulations of general application. So, the next question is: Is a regulation limiting or prohibiting violence, or violent acts, on television an infringement on the right to freedom of expression?

Now, I have noted the difficulties in drafting a regulation on violence, but I cannot conceive of any regulation which would not interfere with the artistic or editorial judgment of the artist, producer, director or editor. The analogy is to obscenity--in fact, as noted above, violence linked to sex may in some cases be proscribed. I conclude that the freedom to express oneself on the subject of violence is protected by the right to freedom of expression.

Now that doesn't necessarily, under the Broadcasting Act, constitute an impediment to regulation because, as we have seen, the broadcaster's freedom of expression is expressly made subject by Section 3(c) to laws of general application. Thus, a broadcaster cannot infringe the laws relating to defamation or obscenity, for example, without risking prosecution. Under this section, any law applying to all

broadcasters, even one relating to violent acts, would appear to be permissible, even if it infringes on the right to freedom of expression.

So I would conclude that a regulation enacted by the Commission, limiting or prohibiting violence on television, in enforceable terms, and applicable to all broadcasters, would be valid under the Broadcasting Act....I hope the press doesn't go to the phones, because that's not the end of it, by any means.

We must now turn to the Canadian Bill of Rights. This Statute, in effect since August 10, 1960, declares that in Canada there have existed and shall continue to exist certain human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. Every Canadian law, that is every law passed by Parliament, (including any regulation enacted under any such law) shall, the Act says, unless Parliament expressly declares that such law shall operate notwithstanding the Bill of Rights, be so construed as not to abrogate, abridge, or infringe the fundamental rights and freedoms.

What rights and fundamental freedoms is the Bill of Rights dealing with? That question has come before the Supreme Court of Canada in two major cases, the Sunday Bowling

Alley Case, as it is called, and the Drybones Case. As a result of these cases, it may be said that in order to determine the scope of the rights and freedoms which are safeguarded by the Bill of Rights, the concept of those rights and freedoms as it existed in 1960 must be examined. You cannot look only to the statutes or laws which were in force then since, as the Bill says, they have to be interpreted in the light of the Bill of Rights. So, if a section of an act of Parliament which was enacted before the Bill of Rights in 1960, infringes on a human right or freedom as it was conceived of in 1960, then that section will be held invalid. It's a difficult argument to follow, but actually it's quite logical and makes a good deal of sense. If you wish to read further on that, I refer you to Professor Tarnapolsky's article at page 74 of the Cases.

The conclusion to be drawn from the Supreme Court decisions is that the enlargement of the scope of the basic freedoms in the future is in doubt. If, for instance, through future human experience in the world we wish in Canada to say that there is an additional freedom which wasn't conceived of in 1960, it is doubtful whether the Bill of Rights would contain it. You would probably have to amend the Bill of Rights to include that.

Now, by the same token, and even more important for our discussion, an enlargement on the limitation on such freedoms is even more doubtful. The Bill of Rights itself is intended to be a bar to such enlargement and, as the Bill clearly states, if there is to be an abridgement of rights and fundamental freedoms, then it must be expressly declared by Parliament.

The Broadcasting Act of 1968 is subject to the Bill of Rights and has to be interpreted in light of its provisions. Whatever regulatory power the Commission is given under the Act must, when it relates to freedom of expression, be construed with the Bill of Rights in mind, and that notwithstanding the language of Section 3(c) to which I referred before.

Now, we concluded that a regulation limiting or prohibiting violence on television is an infringement of the right to freedom of expression. In order to determine whether that infringes the Bill of Rights you have to look to see what the concept of freedom of speech was in Canada in 1960, and what the limits are.

As Professor Tarnapolsky points out, the limits on free speech as recognized by our laws now and in 1960, are

defamation, blasphemy, sedition, obscenity, and censorship. I will only deal here with obscenity and censorship since they are the only ones that have any application.

As regards censorship, it is clear that the CRTC has no power to censor programs. If there was ever any doubt on that score, the judgment in the National Indian Brotherhood Case must be considered to have dispelled it. As Justice Walsh said:

> Reading the Act as a whole, and in particular the sections to which I have referred, I find it difficult to conclude that Parliament intended to, or did give the Commission the authority to act as a censor of programs to be broadcast or televised.

I know of no other federal legislation creating a censorship which would be applicable in the circumstances.

Now, insofar as obscenity is concerned, I have already referred to the fact that there is a prohibition to publish any matter the dominant characteristic of which is the undue exploitation of sex and violence. That matter is deemed to be obscene. That definition of obscenity was added to the Criminal Code in 1959 just prior to the enactment of the Bill of Rights. Thus, violence and sex unduly exploited as a dominant characteristic of a work was a statutory limitation on the freedom of

speech in 1960, and it could be concluded that it was a part of the concept of freedom of speech as such concept existed in 1960.

All of that is to say simply that a prosecution based on the undue exploitation of sex and violence as a dominant characteristic of a program, could be sustained. However, on the other hand, it is clear that a similar prosecution, based on violence alone, would not succeed, since by definition it is sex and violence, not violence alone, that is obscene.

While the limitation on certain aspects of sex and violence may be within the concept of freedom of expression as it existed in 1960, I am not aware of any evidence that a limitation or prohibition of violence alone was a part of that concept. In view of this, I do not consider that the courts could accept a limitation confined to violence alone as a valid abrogation, abridgement or infringement of freedom of speech. That would seem to me to run directly contrary to the whole purpose and intent of the Bill of Rights. It flows from this that, in my view, any regulation of the CRTC purporting to limit or prohibit violence on television would be held to be invalid.

That doesn't end the story, as Miss LaMarsh has pointed out. There is a clear way to broaden out the scope of the limitations on freedom of expression beyond those which existed in 1960, if, as a society, we wish to do so. It is by the legislative action of the only body in our system of government to whom such a responsibility should be given--Parliament.

That ends my examination of the Broadcasting Act. I thought I'd just very briefly say that the U.S. practice, as you are probably aware, either from your experience or what you have heard here this weekend, the U.S. practice in the area of standards of programs is to proceed by way of industry self-regulation. It is questionable whether the FCC has the power to set program standards at all, in view of the First Amendment. A discussion of the NAB and the network codes relating to program content can be found at page 129 of the Cases and Materials. There is also the recent report of the FCC with respect to televised violence which begins at page 155. It is short, and it contains an excellent statement of the FCC's position on self-regulation in this area.

In England, the IBA is required under its statute, to establish a code on violence. I understand it requires

adherence to that code in licensing its producers. The article by Joseph Weltman at page 149 of the Cases and Materials is an extremely literate discussion of the subject of the control of television violence.

Thank you.

Dr. J. W. (Hans) Mohr is now a Commissioner with the Law Reform Commission of Canada on leave of absence as a Professor at Osgoode Hall Law School and the Department of Sociology at York University. His main teaching and research has been in the area of criminology and social deviance. Before joining York University, he spent ten years with the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto and was also the head of the section of Social Pathology Research at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry. His main work there dealt with research in sexual behaviour and offences, homicide and aggression.

There is not only convention in TV drama, there is also convention for conferences of this kind. Although I know very little about the communications industry and many of the things that have been discussed here during the last two days, the convention that I have observed is nevertheless familiar to me. Let me sketch the scenario: The concerns at issue are first raised by humanists who are disturbed by what they observe but who are not sufficiently sure about their values to place their concerns squarely on this ground; they call on the social scientists to deliver the justification, to prove that what the humanists know is wrong is also harmful. Social scientists like to be taken seriously, to be needed and to be instrumental, they try to deliver the

goods but are quick to disclaim any responsibility for what is to be done. For instance, Professor Liebert, after an impressive presentation which left most people convinced that TV violence is harmful to children, made it quite clear that he is against any curtailment of freedom of speech.

The ball then moves to the practitioners, agents and industrialists who claim that they are doing the best they can, but that money and competition is a problem. But, they claim, there are hopeful signs and things are really getting better anyway. They clearly do not want any controls either. Finally we come to the agent of control, the law-man, yet he, too, tends to be a liberal humanist in a forum such as this and Mr. Lawrence made it abundantly clear that with all the instrumentation in the law, checked and counter-checked into paralysis, there really was not much room for positive (or negative) expectations. So we turn to the reformer, and here I am. The ball has by now become a hot chestnut and I could still pass it on to Professor Frye for final summation and consummation. Before doing this, however, I would like to reflect on the subject of control and our underlying expectations.

I have already mentioned that I know very little about the communications industry, and after what I have heard here, I

think that the word 'industry' is an appropriate one. I have spent the last twenty years in another industry, the anti-crime industry. From the viewpoint of control, very similar features appear and I would like to see whether one can draw parallels, especially since for both the subject of crime seems to be a central item.

In the feedback I get from the crime and anti-crime industry, I see a dangerous confusion between violence in the media and violence in reality. There are very significant differences between fantasy violence and actual violence. The differences are so essential in fact that any argument that is based on direct correlations between the two, such as in arguments about the effects of TV violence on the behaviour of children, must be re-examined. Let me take as a basis for this re-examination the images of violence in the mind of students, patients, criminals, policemen, judges and ordinary citizens which, over the years, I have identified as feedback from media fare.

For some time, until it got too repetitive and boring, I made it a point before talking about violence to an audience, to ask for a description of the most common and typical case of murder, when it happened and where, who were the people involved and what was the situation. Unless there was somebody there who was aware of the actual facts, I was invariably

given the most atypical situation and each parameter tended to be the polar opposite of those found in the majority of actual cases. They did, however, correspond to the majority of TV presentations. Ask yourself what image the word 'murder' conjures up in your own mind. The dark streets, alleys, warehouses, banks in the process of a crime or pure sadistic terrorizing, and so on. The analysis of murder cases, of course, shows that it is most often the cosy home, and even there the cosiest places like kitchen and bedroom; it is not dark at all, but well lit; people are quite familiar with each other and even the murderer himself is not a professional sadist but often somebody who could not hurt a fly before this particular occasion.

The same holds true for the relationship between violence and sexual deviation--it is rare in reality, but was high on TV when our concerns about sexual behaviour, usually projected on to children, was in the foreground. It has now been largely traded in for a concern with drugs. I feel a bit like an historical animal since I have worked in the field of sexual deviation, and when, after years of work, results started to appear, concerns had already shifted to something else. I am glad to see that the same thing is happening now to researchers in the field of drugs. It may be a lesson to consider that those who actively brought delinquency into control are now called the 'child savers' in a very pejorative

way because they built their control measures largely on images rather than realities.

Let me attempt to summarize the comparison of actual and TV violence along four perspectives which may serve us then as prospectives for the question of control.

First, everybody maintains that we do not want violence. This, I take it, is true, at least on the surface, for actual violence. It certainly is not true for TV violence. If nothing else then, the very data presented here at this conference convince me that there is a strong demand for violence on TV. The same, it seems to me, holds for the marketing of films and written material. Is this not a jarring contradition? What does it mean when most people claim that they hate violence but are eager to participate in it vicariously? What does it mean by itself even before we raise the question whether depicted violence contributes to actual violence? What is this public demand for depicted violence all about and where does it come from and why does it disturb us so that we hold conferences and talk about control?

The second dimension, which may also throw a bit of light on the first one, is that most actual violence is private and inter-personal, whereas TV violence is mainly public and

impersonal. I have already indicated this in the case of murder, but it holds for all other forms of violence as well. Child-battering, assaults and tormenting are matters not so much for strangers as beloved ones. We do not want to talk about this, nor do we want to be faced with it,and hence the demand for the other violence. The TV screen becomes a screen in the true sense of screening out what is real and what we do not want to see. This is even true for people who should know better, like police officers. My experience has been that they too, when talking about violence tend to talk mainly about TV images until one pins them down to their own experience. On that level they know that family situations tend to be the most dangerous ones and in fact the majority of killings of policemen occurs in marital-dispute situations, not in bank robberies and the pursuit of gangsters.

This raises the third point. Violence, as I have been told here is very prevalent on TV but its actual expression in reality is a rare event for most Canadians. This does not prevent people from talking about the violence around them although they have in fact neither seen nor experienced it. If one raises this question, even in a large audience, one consistently finds that most people never had an experience with any serious form of crime and yet they hold the belief that the society around them is crime-ridden. Where do they take this image from--we know by now--and, what is more

important, what does this image and conception do to their social relations and their behaviour, their trust and mistrust and their responses to others?

And this is my fourth and last point, and in some ways the most important perspective on the issue of control because the very quest for control of violence is based on its TV definition. It is no particular puzzle that we would want to deal with inhuman things in an inhuman way; that we would want to control external forces in an external way. The primary model for control is, of course, the criminal law. It is a big stick, but let me warn you that in human affairs this big stick is just a dildo. It helps keeping up appearances of action, but is not very fruitful.

The word 'code' has been used on several occasions in this conference and it is only natural that if one looks for an instrument of control that one should think of a code of prohibitions. In my work we also have a code, the Criminal Code of Canada. It has a great number of prohibitions but they almost pale into insignificance when one finds, as we did in the Commission, that outside this Code there are a further 20,000 federal offences and in provincial statutes, for each province, roughly another 20,000 offences. And we seem to be adding more every day. So why not one for TV violence while inflation of values is rampant anyway?

But do codes control prohibited behaviour? It is difficult today to hang on to this naive belief. Why not? Because we are not satisfied with codes which set out values, we want them to have teeth, which means sanctions, which means force and violence in a different form. And as soon as we have this force we have to build in protection against it which leads to the "sporting theory" of justice, which may lead to lucrative employment for lawyers and less lucrative occupations of inspectors, investigators and other bureaucrats, but hardly to a resolution of the problem for which we have created these empires in the first place. And we need definitions,which, as you can see in the case of obscenity, are hopeless once they enter the legal adversary process.

Let me clarify. I am not opposed to the kind of codes which Mr. Sinclair defended earlier in the conference. But the discussion already showed up the problems. One group felt that they were over-controlled, whereas another group felt that such codes don't work anyway. (And both opinions may have been held by the same people.) But codes neither control nor work--or don't work. Codes are books with things written in them. What is important is the <u>process</u> of accusation and defence, if you are in the adversary mode, or a <u>process</u> which allows discussion, clarification and accountability in a true sense, if you chose a non-adversary mode. In the television industry he can no longer look for the bad guys, only for

bad things arising from the nature of the corporate enterprise, and it seems to me that you need a forum for examining the problem. Not even the president of a network will be able to control the presentation of violence, no more than the Prime Minister can control most forms of actual violence in the country. The experience in the United States has clearly demonstrated that.

The feeling of impotence is all pervasive. Why is this so? Mr. Kotcheff has given a vivid presentation of the production process and its machine-like quality. It is banal to say that this production process is dehumanizing but one begins to understand why the product tends to be depersonalized and the fact remains that responsibility and accountability can only be claimed from persons. It seems to me from this conference, however, that we do not know enough about the production process and its consequences and effects. I know that I do not, I am quite sure that the general public does not, and I suspect now that the insiders are not so sure about it either, since each one only has insight into a part of the system. One starts to realize that in spite of the tremendous impact of TV on society, the medium itself is really an enigma to most people. The medium here is not the message, but disappears behind the message; the medium is the hidden machinery of the magician who stuns us to believe in a reality which has never been. It is obviously successful to

the point of stupefaction and addiction and I don't think control is possible unless more of the machinery is exposed.

To be more concrete, I believe that we need a forum in which the very nature of the medium is discussed. To be meaningful to a wider public, this cannot be done in the abstract. It must concentrate on program items and program distributions in the light of public concern. Here I do think that the CRTC has a role to provide such a forum and I hope that this conference is a beginning. I would also hope that a commission such as the one chaired by Judy LaMarsh in Ontario will work towards raising public awareness and not so much towards legislation and expert research. In much of the expert presentations here and the discussions following, it was difficult to find a common ground. There were a number of concerned citizens here who had no expertise to offer, only their concerns, but I did not hear them speak. It is very intimidating to participate in a meeting which is directed by and for experts and their concerns. At the beginning of the conference there were some references by people to their own children until one of them was told that he was not invited as a father. Why not? To me the reference to one's own children did provide a legitimation of first-hand knowledge. It also legitimated the humanness of the people who were here.

If we have to apologize for the expression of direct human

experience and if only the experts can speak on the basis of figures and data, then we have reached the ground of all violence: the extinction of humanness. And if this is so, then TV or this conference are only metaphors for the space we are in. And then, it seems to me that the call for state control is only a further symptom and metaphor and not a cure and resolution.

In summary, the end and the outcome of this conference should not be the question of control. A beginning has been made in establishing the problem but barely a beginning in establishing the nature of our concerns. Coming to grips with more than stereotypes is always frustrating and there has been a good deal of frustration here. But it will not do to dissolve these tensions and frustrations with easy answers. These tensions and frustrations, let me suggest, have not been produced in the conference--they have only been discovered--and I for one would argue for further discovering and uncovering.

SUMMATION OF THE SYMPOSIUM ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE,

Dr. Northrop Frye, widely known internationally as an author and scholar, is a part-time member of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission and Professor at the University of Toronto, Victoria College. Dr. Frye is a graduate of Victoria College, University of Toronto and Merton College, Oxford. An ordained United Church of Canada minister, Dr. Frye also graduated in theology from Emmanuel College. He joined Victoria College in 1939 and was Principal of the College prior to his 1967 retirement. Dr. Frye's publications include: Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake (1947); Anatomy of Criticism (1957); he Well-Tempered Critic (1963); The Educated Imagination (1963); T. S. Eliot (1963); Fables of Identity (1963); A Natural Perspective (1965); The Return of Eden (1965); Fools of Time (1967); The Modern Century (1967); and A Study of English Romanticism (1968). Dr. Frye has lectured at over 100 international universities, and holds a variety of honorary degrees and awards, including the Canada Council Medal for distinguished contribution to Canadian literature.

The problem of violence is a problem without boundaries, and it expands indefinitely into the human situation. Of other major problems confronting us, those of ecology, the energy crisis, the curtailing of natural resources, the exterminating of animal and plant species, are the result of inheriting several centuries of systematic violence against nature. As for human society, violence is built into that on various levels. Wherever there are great inequalities of wealth and privilege, there is at least indirect violence, and the tremendous productivity of the United States, the major part of the North American civilization to which we belong, has been built up by a social activity that has included slavery, lynchings, the bad men of the Wild West, free fights with eyes gouged out, beatings of union organizers, and the more carefully legalized violence of the "robber barons" who built up such immense fortunes, some of which have become charitable foundations subsidizing studies in violence. In an expanding society like nineteenth-century America, violence flourishes on the social or economic frontier; as the continent became socially consolidated, much of this violence was forced underground, and became increasingly anti-social. Apart from outright crime, which is now a business like any other, there are many activities which are still legal but are morally wrong. When a broadcaster and a sponsor conspire to produce a socially irresponsible programme, that is in itself a violent situation, and has to be recognized as such.

immediately rationalized, and turns self-righteous. All rationalized violence has much the same argument, the argument behind all fights on school playgrounds: he started it. That is, whenever violence is rationalized it is asserted to be counter-violence. Somebody else did something first, and we have to resist it. That is true of the violence of capital punishment; it is true of the violence of Palestinian terrorists. Fictional violence, however, may be rationalized more simply as a refusal to take a positive attitude in a violent world: i.e., this is what we're all involved in, whether we like it or not, etc. But the real reason, as Mr. Kotcheff remarked this morning, is simply lack of imagination: depicting violence is easy, quick, and profitable. It is easy partly because violence is a mechanical form of human energy: so mechanical that it can even be quantified or classified as "heavy" or "light", as last night's films attempted to show. As a mechanical cause producing a mechanical response, violence never accomplishes anything: the pendulum of aggression and counter-aggression simply goes on swinging all through history.

To discuss such a question seriously we have to get away from what I think of as the whodunit fallacy. Many people think they are being practical about social problems when they think they have located a cause. We wouldn't have inflation if it weren't for unreasonable union demands; we wouldn't have wars if it weren't for the profit motive in making munitions, and so on. But every such located cause turns out eventually to be one more symptom of the problem, and not a cause at all.

Mr. Garth Jowett's paper outlined a history of disapproval of popular arts, as causes of a great number of social evils. First there were dime novels and penny dreadfuls; then there were movies, then comic books, and now television. One can always find some evidence for such arguments, but the evidence is seldom conclusive because of the "predisposed" element so often mentioned at this conference. Some people are always looking for something to trigger them off to violence, and such stimuli are not hard to come by in any society. This is not an argument for dismissing the seriousness of the social effects of violent television programmes, as so many of their producers argue; it is merely an argument against regarding television violence as the cause of social violence. For as soon as a cause is thought to be located, the next step is "take it away; censor it; ban it". This would be a logical inference if the cause diagnosis were sound, but it isn't; there are too many causes. Censorship is itself a violent, or counter-violent, solution: it assumes that you've caught the real villain and are justified in doing what you like to him, which is precisely the fallacy of violence itself.

We should be careful, therefore, not to go the way of the past, when our forebears tried to cure alcoholism by the law of prohibition, or sexual excesses by censoring books. One can see in such measures vestiges of middle-class prejudice, and nervousness about what people might do without supervision. Prohibition was partly an attempt to impose a middle-class work ethic on the whole of society; prudery was partly a middle-class reaction to the fact that sex was something available to

ordinary people, who really shouldn't be allowed to have it. Such measures turn what could otherwise be quite genuine problems into empty anxiety or pseudo-problems; they always focus on token anxiety symbols, like four-letter words, and they generally end in over-compensation. That is, after a generation of prohibition North American society has become as boozy a society as the world has ever seen, and after a century or so of the most frantic prudery about sex, it has become--well, you can finish that sentence for yourselves.

When newspapermen say that a democracy must have a free press, what they mean is "we want to run this paper ourselves". But behind that there may be a quite genuine belief that running the paper themselves would make for a freer society than external control would do, and the belief may well be right. In any case I sympathize with the low threshold against censorship demonstrated here: some of the liveliest moments of discussion came when someone on a panel would say "I am entirely opposed to censorship and repressive legislation", and three people would jump up and say "What do you mean by talking about censorship and repressive legislation?" But not many people are really defending censorship here: Mr. Lawrence says that the CRTC has no power to censor programmes, and I for one would not stay on it for ten minutes if I thought it was seeking such powers. Regulations are easy to pass, but equally easy to evade; Mr. Les Brown has reminded us of the vast industrial inertia bound up with the status quo, which can make any amount of regulation impotent. The only real justification for violence is self-defence, and of course society has a right to self-defence as

well as the individual. But censorship and attempt at regulation are circular, following the dreary round of: how do we prevent the growing disrespect for law? Well, pass a law against it. One difficulty here is that the law can never ultimately catch the right people. Even a professional hired killer is less dangerous to society than the man who hires him, and the drug addict who murders in quest of a fix is still less dangerous than the man who controls the heroin supply.

There is really no way to circumvent the laborious, frustrating, illogical procedures of democracy. Producers of irresponsible programmes, like producers of motor cars which are death traps, will not improve what they are doing, so long as it is profitable, until they are forced to do so by the general pressure of society. Society as a whole includes all the regulatory agencies in government, religious groups, minority groups, groups of concerned citizens, and the people of integrity in the business itself. Any one of these may represent a very partial interest, but out of the whole conflict we get some sense of society as a structure, a society as far as it can get from the homogeneous mob. Something of that was beginning to emerge from the Pastore hearings, and I am seeing it emerging from this symposium as well.

At the same time, I think nearly everyone here feels that violence on television constitutes a genuine problem, and is not an anxiety or pseudo-problem. It may have some of the characteristics of anxiety-problems: there is the same desire to protect the weakest members of the community, which means the children—fifty years ago it would have

been women and children--and there is nervousness over the fact that we can't control access to a television set as we can to a public theatre. The authority of parents is all we have to depend on, and in many—perhaps most--North American households that is not good enough. But Mr. Liebert and others have, I think, convinced us that something much more tangible than anxiety is involved. It is always possible to say to a social scientist that there may be methodological errors in his research and that he should go back and do some more research, but that's only stalling: the problem exists and it's here. As such, it is primarily an educational problem. By education I mean the structuring of experience that goes on every moment of our waking lives, not merely schooling, which is a very small, though certainly very central, part of education. Much of it, further, falls into my own area of literary education. No medium of communication can convey anything directly except sounds, verbal or musical, and images, and the communication of words is as important here as it is anywhere.

We have to start with the peculiar characteristics of television as a medium, and more particularly as a medium of education. In teaching children one element to be educated is the imagination, the creative and structuring part of the mind. In literature, the imagination is best taught and trained through oral instruction, that is, telling stories, through learning to read and through encouraging children to write and tell their own stories. The stories children themselves tell are often quite ferocious: the fairy tale that ends dispensing poetic justice on all sides is likely to be an aduct concoction. But the ferocity doesn't

matter so much when it's a part of imaginative development: it's something to watch, but not something to be unduly concerned about. Television, because it presents the visual image directly, is not the best medium for training the imagination: what it is best at is training sensory alertness. That is why it is so influential a medium, and why it so strongly suggests imitation, at least by children and sick or immature adults. Its power to inspire imitation is, of course, the main reason why we're all here. Again, partly because of the way it can enter our lives from within our own homes, the television image has an energy of impact beyond that of any other medium. One could say, and I think M. Basile did say, that television is inherently a violent medium, violent by the nature of its own form, apart altogether from its content.

The experience of life is a continuity, and news is essentially what breaks into that continuity. That is why so much news consists of disaster, and why all disaster is news. When news breaks into the continuity of life, it sets up a polarity, of safety against danger, security against threat. When the issues of the day become news, the simplest way to deal with them is to polarize them, break them into a for and against opposition, create adversary situations of the "hot seat" type, or assimilate controversy to the pattern of an election issue, where the conclusion is to vote for A or for B. Television, at least in communities where there is a round-the-clock supply of programmes, is the most continuous medium in history, and forms a counter-world to experience, a world continuously polarized between good and bad, safety

The educational problem I mentioned earlier resolves itself into one of turning the passive viewer into an active one, and this process should begin as early as possible in childhood. It was Gandhi who discovered that the most effective form of political violence was non-violence, because non-violent resistance forces the other side to exhibit violence. But the principle that passivity engenders violence can be applied in ways that would have horrified Gandhi. The passive viewer has to be increasingly stimulated: he gets bored or desensitized quickly, and so there must be a continual escalation of ferocity. Yet even so nothing is really going on, for him: nobody dies, nobody comes alive. The television set is a curiously ghostly medium: on our day, if we see ghosts or hear ghostly voices in the air, it means that somebody has left the televisiwn on. But the passive viewer's whole world is equally spectral: he cannot distinguish fact from fiction either on the screen or off it. He may see the most terrible event take place on the street before his eyes, but he will not lift a finger even to call the police. Nothing is really happening. This represents a central and frightening problem of violence in itself: a zombie existence in which violence emerges as a desperate effort at identity. Marshall McLuhan's phrase "the medium is the message" has been quoted so often, even at this conference, that it has lost all its meaning, if it ever had any. But another phrase of McLuhan's is much more concrete: he speaks of the need for civil defence against media fallout, which exactly describes what I mean here.

In attempting to train children to become active viewers, of television as of the rest of life, our assumption has to be that there is no audience in modern society: we can't afford to have audiences any more. We're all on the stage: each of us has a role to learn and a part to play. One of the roots of this problem is the old gap between the highbrow and the lowbrow, the academic and the popular, the over-detached and the over-involved, and hypercritical and the uncritical. This gap is a socially morbid condition, and everything positive we are trying to do, about violence or any other problem, depends on outgrowing it. The electronic media can help us to outgrow it, I think; but we need other changes. I wish teachers of literature, starting with kindergarten, would understand that what confronts them is the student's whole verbal experience, and that everything we think of as literature is, in that experience, only the visible tip of an iceberg.

I was once talking to a Grade Eight teacher who had given his students the problem of studying the rhetorical devices in television advertising, examining the status symbols offered, distinguishing the flattery from the threats, and seeing what was being referred to in both. The effect was so shattering that he thought at first he was working with too young an age-group, but he soon realized that he had struck the level on which their verbal experience was really being affected. They were not too young: on the contrary, any child old enough to be affected by television advertising is also old enough to study its effect on himself. The next step is the study of convention. Literature is made up entirely of conventions. There are no unconventional writers; convention is something

that we can never break with; we can only build on it. Mr. Kotcheff's description of the assembling of a Mannix show is an example of convention on the lowest level: the difference between that and King Lear is a vast difference in degree of subtlety and complexity, but it is not really a difference in kind. But, because fact and fiction are presented in much the same frameworks in television, we have also to study the conventions of news reporting and of the discussing of contemporary issues, along with advertising and the entertainment programmes. I am not thinking of this as a debunking operation, designed to make the student feel hostile or superior to television: I simply want him to understand what is going on, as early in life as possible. But, of course, understanding what is going on would also liberate him from the sense of what one of the reports issued by the Research Department of the CRTC calls the "intrinsic authenticity" of the medium.

A small child knows that he can be hurt, mentally and physically; but it takes him much longer to understand that others can be hurt too, and that it matters whether they are or not. In all scenes of violence there is the choice of identifying either with the agent or with the victim of violence. The "natural" or easiest tendency is to identify with the agent: this is primarily what is wrong with the wrong kind of television programme. The path of genuine education has to go through identification with the victim. In Christianity, as M. Coté remarked, the centre of violence is the Crucifixion, and Christians are directed to focus their attention on a victim of mob violence. This would be

equally true of Judaism, with its long and terrible history of anti-Semitism; it is also true of Classical culture. Plato's Republic is written around the question of why it is better to suffer than to inflict injustice. The focussing of interest on the victim is a common civilizing element in all our major cultural traditions.

In literature, the difference between identifying with the agent and with the victim provides a basis for distinguishing what are called melodrama and tragedy. In melodrama we are expected to take the "right" side, to applaud the hero and hiss the villain, it being much more clearly established in melodrama than it ever is in actual life which is which. Melodrama appeals to the element of mob violence in us, the self-righteous sense that we know the good guys from the bad guys, the "law and order" rationalizations that are growing so rapidly in society today, as the panic engendered by so much crime develops a vigilante complex among us. But it is significant that melodrama is something we don't take very seriously. Mr. Sinclair referred to Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus, which is a melodrama, and a very instructive one. In this play the villain kidnaps the hero's two sons, and says he will kill them unless the hero chops off his hand and sends it to him. The hero does so--on the stage, of course--but the villain doublecrosses him and kills the sons anyway. Howev r, the hero gets his deposit back: the villain sends him his hand, along with his sons' two heads. Then there is the question of getting all this meat off the stage: the here takes both heads in one hand by their hair, but finds he hasn't any other hand with which to carry his other hand, if

you follow me, and so turns to the heroine, who carries it off in her mouth, because she has had both hands cut off and her tongue cut out in a previous caper. Finally the villain, who is black, is caught and sentenced to be buried alive up to his neck: his response is melodramatically most satisfactory: he wishes only that he had been able to do ten thousand more evil deeds.

If a member of Shakespeare's audience were to feel that all this was only a lot of masturbation, and wanted to see something that was for real, he could go over to Tyburn to watch the execution of the latest traitor. The traitor would be hanged, cut down while still conscious, disembowelled, castrated, and finally torn to pieces by horses. The audience would think: what a very bad man to have done such a thing, and how protected and secure we should feel that all this is being done to him. When I speak of concern for the victim of violence I do not mean sentimentality; the punishment of criminals is doubtless an inescapable element of social life. What is wrong is the pleasure in the punishment, or in any act of violence whatever.

What we call tragedy in literature is usually an action in which an agent of violence becomes a victim of it. As a victim, we look at his fate with concern, though not always necessarily with sympathy: we may feel sorry for Romeo and Juliet, but our feelings about Macbeth are different. The audience of a tragedy accepts violence as a fact of life: we are not living in the Garden of Eden, and violence is one of the things that are always happening. When we see it happen, our view of

it is detached, but not indifferent; concerned, but not weakly sentimental. This attitude of detached concern is what is meant in literature by catharsis. Catharsis does not mean working off aggressive feelings by watching violent television programmes: it means that when we see violence, violent emotions are aroused in us, and that a fully mature response passes through and beyond these violent emotions, reaching a point at which we accept the reality of what is presented to us, but accept it with neither approval nor panic. This is the attitude, surely, that the active viewer should take to all the violence reflected on his television set.

At this point, perhaps, we may see what a profoundly civilizing force television could be, and potentially is. All new inventions are apt to come first as social headaches, and it takes a while before their real usefulness is understood. In my younger days, in the thirties of this century, I was often shocked and disgusted at the callousness with which intellectuals could rationalize or dismiss so many of the most horrif ing events of our times, such as the great Stalin massacres and deportations, whenever such events did not happen to fit their political categories. Their infantilism was connected with their being entirely men of print: they never saw anything except lines of type on a page. But something of the real horror and evil of the Vietnam war did get on television, and the effect on public opinion was, on the whole good, in the sense that the American public came to hate the war, instead of becoming complacent about or inured to it. In a world like ours, horrifying things will happen practically every day from now into the

foreseeable future. Newsmen in all media have a duty to report violence when it occurs; novelists and dramatists have a duty to present imaginative forms of it. For an audience of concerned, serious, active viewers, this is a part of reality, and we can fight violence in the street with better courage and hope if the violence on the screen is on our side.

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